



Slipstream

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The Story of Henry Young Our Oldest Member?



COMFAA, CDRE David Frost examines as Henry explains his flights from his near 80 year old Pilot's Log Book

Well what's there to say about Henry you may ask?

To begin with he's an active 98 (soon to be 99) year old who still enjoys playing tennis and has a committed social life. This year, again saw Henry in the Adelaide Anzac Day march. Later with his wife Madge they attended the FAAAA Anzac Day Luncheon.

He was one of the originals on the formation of the RAN Fleet Air Arm, joining as a LEUT (P) RAN.

His experience enabling him to join direct was not inconsiderable. In 1943, he volunteered to enlist in the RNZNVR as a pilot to fly with the RN FAA. Initial, advanced and operational training was carried out in the US. The basic flying training took place at the USN Naval Air Station Pensacola

At the young age of 10, Henry Young and family moved from Adelaide to Dunedin New Zealand (NZ) where his father had been transferred as Manager for the Commonwealth Bank. Throughout his younger years, Henry enjoyed life in NZ completing high school.

On finishing school, Henry's father insisted he have a job before joining up, as after WWI many sol-

diers came back to no job. So Henry followed his father into banking, joining the Bank of NSW serving in six branches all over NZ as a replacement teller for those who had joined the war. At 18, he was eligible to join up.

"I found out NZ was

the only Empire country supplying pilots to the RN Fleet Air Arm, so that if you wanted to fly, you could choose the Air Force or the Navy. That is, if you passed all their requirements. So, I put in for the Navy because I just loved the thought of flying and being on a carrier," Henry said

Japan at that stage had not entered the war. The selection process proved relatively hard, one example was having to pass 20 words a minute in Morse Code. Because he played rugby, a major sport in NZ, and had a Telegraphist Licence from the Postmaster General's Depart-

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Boeing Stearman Henry's first training aircraft

ment he'd obtained after hearing of this requirement, his success was ensured.

Then the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour. The NZ Government became flustered because the Army was in the Middle East; the RNZN was in the Mediterranean; and the RNZAF was in England. All that remained in NZ were young 18 year olds!!

Henry was called up a day or two later and reported to the Army. "We went out to the nearest football ground where the officers had the grandstand for their quarters, and we all had tents which had been erected, and they marched us out to the nearest farm where they issued us with chaff bags. Then we attacked the haystack and filled our Chaff bags with straw, marched to the football ground and then once a week we had a shower. We marched down to the abattoirs, and we all had a shower there while the abattoirs people were working," Henry said.

After spending seven months with the Army, the Royal Navy (RN) asked what had happened to all the men who had been promised to join from the RNZNVR for the RN FAA. NZ informed the RN that all were now in the Army. A further six months passed and all were transferred to the RNZAF while waiting to be released. Eventually, they were relocated to the Navy their original aim!! It was 1943 and all potential aircrew recruits for service with the RN were sent to an island in Auckland Harbour for

three months for basic training involving many activities. Instructors broke 'recruits' in, notwithstanding all had been through the rigors of the Army and Air Force.

Then it was off to England via the Panama Canal in a passenger/cargo ship, the only passengers being eight RNZN personnel. In a convoy to New York, two ships were sunk by German U-boats. This passage was a happy hunting ground for the Germans. The next convoy was from New York to Southampton, arriving at dusk.

A truck had been sent to pick up the RNZN sailors to convey them to the training establishment, HMS *St. Vincent* located at Portsmouth. Yet again these "recruits" after over a year's service in the Army, RNZAF and RNZN found themselves in another camp for basic training. Henry also became heavily involved in rugby throughout this period and enjoyed his time spent there.

The three months spent at *St. Vincent* went rather quickly and the NZers were given a choice of Canada or the United States

(US). All were RNZNVR. from *St. Vincent* all became Leading Naval Airman with white 'cap tallies' meaning on the award of 'wings' all would become officers.

"I requested the USA, played rugby, and had done reasonably well academically so pushed for this in lieu of Canada. The ship went to Canada first. All went across on the *Queen Mary*, which had been rigged out as a troop ship with no escort of any sort because we were too fast for any submarines," Henry stated.

Those selected for training in the US with the United States Navy (USN) travelled by train to NAS Lambert St. Louis, arriving on 30 May 1944 where all the RN and RNZN trainees were integrated with United States trainee pilots. Both pilots and observers did the same course. Henry enjoyed his training as he'd already been through several 'boot camps' and knew what to expect.

At NAS Lambert St. Louis on 5 June 1944, he commenced flying training on the Boeing Stearman. He soloed on 24 June on reaching 15.5 hours. The RN and RNZN lost about 25% at NAS Lambert whereas a greater number of US trainees were whittle out due to the large intakes.



Acting Sub-Lieutenant Henry Young RNZNVR

In the end the USN acquired only the 'cream'!

Henry and those still on pilots course moved down to Pensacola, Florida. On 3 September 1944 they commenced training on SNV - 1 & 2 Venee Valiant aircraft from Naval Air Training Base (NATB) *Ellyson*, Pensacola (3 September 1944 – 24 September 1944).

"Pensacola. Oh, yes. Annapolis of the air. It was rather warmer down there than St. Louis. A very nice establishment, but it'd been Navy for 100 years, and so, they knew what they were doing and how to do it. Yes, down in Florida, as you can imagine, it's beautiful weather. But we were working because they were still doing this whittling out, and I was determined I wouldn't be whittled out." Henry said

Training then moved to a more advanced aircraft - the SNJ-5. The SNJ standing for North American Aircraft Company Texan, WWII Trainer Aircraft. Henry added: "These aircraft were a bit better than the Harvard. It was an advanced trainer and easy to fly, but nevertheless a forgiving plane, as all training planes are". Training continued at NATB *Whiting* also in Pensacola (25 September 1944 – 9 November 1944). A move to NATB *Corry*, Pensacola saw the pilot training carry on from 10 November-24 November.

At NAS *Pensacola* 'wings' were awarded, and NZ graduates were promoted to ASLT RNZNVR. However, flying training continued, ini-



SNV 1 Venee Valiant an early trainer

tially for several months at the Naval Air Training Centre (NATC) *Corpus Christi*, Texas from 27 November 1944 until 17 April 1944. Then it was off to NAS *Beeville*, Texas (17 April 1945 – 4 May 1945) where conversion to the Douglas Dauntless was undertaken. On 10 May 1945, two days after the war in Europe ended, operational training commenced at NAS *Main*, Jacksonville in F4U-1 Corsairs.

Henry describes why the RN and RNZN flyers couldn't undertake deck landing training with the USN:

"We couldn't go to the deck in United States because the USN signals for deck landing in WWII differed from the RN. In the RN if you're too low they'd tell you you're

too low, whereas in USN the same signal meant go lower. The USN gave us everything except the deck landing training. I finished up in the US at NAS *Main* on 24 July 1945 and went back to England to do my deck landing training. However, because the war in Europe was over, I was posted to RNAS *Hinstock* (HMS *Godwit*) on 3 September 1945 where I flew Oxfords for a week".

With so many New Zealanders in UK and Europe at the time, it was decided to have a Rugby team play England. Henry was picked because he had captained a team that had beaten the Royal Naval College Dartmouth. A group of around 25 went to Brighton where Henry had his nose kicked in whilst in a scrum. This resulted in him being carted off to hospital where surgeons 'made' a new nose from one of his hip bones. As a further operation was necessary, Henry was granted two months leave travelling throughout Europe on the condition that no expense was borne by the NZ Government.

Europe was almost decimated. Henry said that you could tell when you got to the centre of the town because the rubbish was high. In other words, not only had the buildings been bombed, but troops fought all over it too. He said it was an awful mess, but an eventful experience for a 21 year old.

"And because of my experience in America, I was just like any other American pilot. I was able to go to any airfield and just stay there for as long as I liked providing I had pa-



Vought F4U Corsair (USMC) in which operational training was conducted in the US for the RN



Seafire aircraft in which Henry undertook Deck Landing training

pers saying that I had to go somewhere else eventually. So, I never stopped in any one location more than a few days.” Henry said.

Because Henry had to stay in England for a second operation, he was one of the last New Zealanders to travel home. In the end, NZ decided the operation should be carried out back in NZ as it was only for tidying up. At the time, Henry was on his way to Norway but, NZ decided to send him back to Australia in HMS *Illustrious* which was bringing out a whole group of personnel. Most of the officers were Catholic priests who were travelling to Australia.

On the way back, *Illustrious* stopped at Colombo and took on two squadrons of Corsairs that were eventually pushed over the side into the Indian Ocean because the aircraft had formed part of the lend/lease programme by the US who didn't want them back!

“I unscrewed the altimeter from one Corsair and still have it today” Henry said.

On arrival in Perth, Henry's father had arranged a job. Hardy's the winemakers were part of his mother's family and offered for him to stay with them while he secured his future. After staying about a fortnight, Henry departed for Sydney where his last nose operation was performed. From there he travelled back to Dunedin as he was still in the RNZNVR.

There Henry was discharge and went back to the bank to offer his

resignation which was accepted. He decided to become a farmer and was accepted under the war service scheme in NZ. After completing a year or two in this occupation, two of Henry's pilot friends from the RNZNVR drew his attention to the fact that Australia was starting up a FAA and that the three of them should venture to Australia and join up!

The RN had already trained several former RAAF pilots for the RANVR with the British Pacific Fleet in 1944/45 in preparation (see within 'Making of a Sea Fury Pilot' on Page 15) for the establishment of the RAN FAA. However, at wars end some elected to undergo a four (4) year Short Service Commission (SSC) with the RN (e.g. Nat Gould).

Appointments for others were terminated in 1946. Many elected, including those on SSC with the RN to join the RAN in 1948 as the first group of pilots.

However, the three former RNZNVR flyers felt that the RAN could also use their help and were accepted with 'open arms'. All the direct entry LEUT (P) RANs were sent the HMAS *Cerberus*, then to the UK on the *Strathaird*. It was about three years after the war and its where Henry met his future wife, Madge.

On arrival training commenced at RNAS *Eglinton* (HMS *Gannet*) in Northern Ireland. During training Henry had an accident which resulted in a smashed nose requiring another operation with the other hip bone used for repairs!

Henry's first flight back in the UK was on 13 August 1948 in a Harvard, dual with LEUT Harris. All told, five dual flights were undertaken before he went solo again on 18 August. Basically, the idea was to get all the direct entry pilots used to flying again

On 24 August, Henry completed both a Firefly and Seafire (RN version of the Spitfire) conversion. In effect, whilst at RNAS *Eglinton* he flew three types: Harvard, Firefly and Seafire regularly. By now, he'd moved to RNAS *Milltown* (HMS *Fulmar II*) Moray shire, Scotland for the Deck Landing (DL) Course. On 4 October 1948, Henry commenced Airfield Dummy Deck Landings (ADDLs) in the Seafire XV and on 8 November commenced Deck Landings on HMS *Illustrious*. On



Sea Fury, the last type aircraft flown by Henry

completion of training, Henry qualified with 119 ADDLs and 8 DLs in the Seafire.

The course had returned to RNAS Eglinton where Henry undertook '1st Famil' on the Sea Fury on 12 November 1948. Following completion of the conversion he was straight into ADDLs and operational training. He 'crash landed' on 7 December following an engine failure resulting in the wings being torn off and him suffering head injuries.

"It's quiet when you're flying along, and your engine suddenly stops. You know, it's a funny feeling, but I was up high enough to look for a field but too low to bail out. In Northern Ireland, all the fields have stone fences and there was one down the middle of the valley where there was no fence. The trouble was it had a clump of trees in the corners that almost met in the middle but didn't. So, I thought it's enough room for me to squeeze through. But, I hit it with one wing, which canted me over. And that's when I lost my starboard wing, which then cartwheeled me across onto my Port wing, which I lost too. This was followed by a half loop with what remained of the aircraft landing on its tail.

When the motion stopped, I found myself sitting there with just two little eyes and my head above my foot. My head had hit the gunsight resulting in an open wound to the head. A vet in an adjacent paddock heard the



Henry's end result after an engine failure in a Sea Fury!

crash and came across and pulled me out." Henry recalled.

The report alluded to the aircraft running out of fuel. Apparently, Henry's squadron was the first to be equipped with Sea Furies and some malfunctions had occurred back at the Hawker factory. It turned out that half of the squadron's fuel gauges were either not operating or operating incorrectly. Flying was authorised providing it was within a two hour limit. Henry's aircraft was within this limit, but the fuel gauge wasn't working.

So, in 1949 he joined HMAS Sydney and exercised with the RN. The crew were all Australian with the main body of aircrew coming from the RN. There were about five Australian aircrew. Nat Gould and Henry

were two of the pilots. Nat formerly an RAAF pilot, joined the RANVR in 1944 and accepted a SSC in the RN at the end of the war. Once the RAN FAA was formed, Nat along with others were able to transfer as referred to previously. They then sailed back to Sydney just in transit with no flying.

After the aircraft had 'worked up' Sydney sailed on a goodwill visit to ports in Australia, NZ and the South Pacific. Some of the operations, especially a take-off without a catapult could be extremely dangerous, especially when closer to the bow!

In one instance Henry scared himself on a 'free' take-off. So, when he landed back on, the head group commander (CMDR Air?) summoned him to the bridge saying he'd observed the take-off. Henry replied: "Yes, it was scary, sir" to which the commander said: "Well, I know what the problem was? You had a full load of photographic gear on your aircraft, and they shouldn't have put you in the front, because that would have been about another 100 pounds or whatever the weight was." Other examples of entering the water on take-off prompted ways to get out in the event the aircraft sinks.

In the days before angle deck landings, it felt as though the ship was moving away from you and being way out to sea it was a task that many Navy pilots had to overcome in those days, as Henry explained: "After you've done that first landing, you're right, because you virtually can't believe how you got there when you hit the wires for the first time. You're not used to being thrown forward and caught. After you get used to landing aboard, it's like coming

A.A.A. Monthly Summary		SECTION III		Reports
SERIAL No.:	12/3	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT:		
TYPE:	Seafury 10	Aircraft forced landed after engine failure.		
SHIP or STATION:	N.A.S. Eglinton			
DATE:	7 - 12 - 48			
AIRCREW:	H.S.C. YOUNG, LT. (P), R.A.N.			
REMARKS:	This accident was caused by the aircraft running out of fuel about 30 minutes sooner than the pilot expected it to. The excessive fuel consumption was due to the maladjustment of the fuel injector.			
	It was found that the screw securing the weak mixture jet valve in the "weak" position had been removed, the lever moved, and re-wired in the "rich" or closed position.			

Accident Report into Henry's engine failure

home to Mother. She gives you a big hug and it's a glorious feeling and it's nice!!"

"Now, of course, you can line up a mile off the stern but then you couldn't, because you'd come in just over stalling speed, since you couldn't afford to glide. This is because you've got the barriers halfway along the ship's deck. So, you've only got that half a deck to land on and you couldn't land on about the first quarter. This is because you don't know whether the ship's going up or down. If it's coming up, you're in trouble. So, you've got to come in high and then you've got to drop.

The only way you can drop is to stall the aircraft and then you drop like a stone, and you die!!

"So, you're coming in with all these things to think about and turning, because you can't see out the front because the nose is right up and the only person you can see is the 'batsman' who is standing on a little platform out to one side. He tells you where you are and tells you what to do. During the war the RN and USN signals differed but following the war the RN adopted the USN format." Henry clarified.

Out of his group. One pilot failed to qualify for DLs. After being sent back to NAS *Nowra* for more training this pilot returned to the ship to fail again. Henry explains:

"Another pilot Danny Buchanan, came down too hard, bounced over

**CORRECTION TO
FRED SHERBOURNE STORY
(March 2022 issue)**

Ailsa Chittick, Curator of the Fleet Air Arm Museum has notified *Slipstream* that the 'Fred Sherbourne display' was not a permanent exhibition and the Museum shop no longer has stock of the book 'An Accidental Hero' by Guy Sherborne for sale.

"We still have a couple of pieces of the plane that crashed, an album of photos and a set of replica medals." Ailsa said.



RADM Sir John Collins (later VADM) welcoming LEUT (P) Henry Young into the RAN at HMAS Cerberus before travelling to the UK

the barriers and landed on the aircraft up forward and wrote about four of them off. He was fine and it didn't kill anybody. It was just a pure accident. He was alright, and it didn't kill anybody. Mechanics weren't working on aircraft at the time. He stayed in the fleet and it's really lucky, I suppose, that when he bounced, he didn't catch a wire. Normally if you came down too hard, you would still catch a wire and not bounce, and he would have just been in there between two wires."

There was one more deployment around Australia, NZ and the Pacific Islands. Henry's family at this stage was still in NZ, so it was that he wanted his family to know that he intended proposing to Madge. As Henry could only put it: "I popped the question and I said that you can have me as an airline pilot or as a farmer. I didn't want to become a full time Navy husband because I think it's very hard on the women. I also loved flying.

"We were in Hobart for the Regatta when I mentioned to a friend, Wendy that I was planning to leave the Navy and intended to be either a farmer or an airline pilot. Could she arrange an interview with her father, one of the founders of Qantas? So I went to the interview where the founder was present to find my Log Book was more than satisfactory. Unfortunately, Qantas weren't at that time recruiting pilots but would keep me in mind when openings occurred.

"I said to Madge she could have me as a farmer or pilot with another airline to which she responded that she'd prefer a farmer, so she'd see me more. So I resigned from the Navy. My last recorded flight in my Log Book is in a Sea Fury on 24 January 1950. That's how I became a farmer!" Henry said.

Henry and Madge have now been married 72 years.

My Father's Service in the RNZAF During WWII

My father's parents met some time during the First World War. Ian's father was an NZ Army captain in a machine gun unit in France and mother was a NZ Nurse on a hospital ship running between France and Britain. My father was born in Melbourne in 1922, however mother and son did not return to NZ until 1928 when he was of school age¹.

Ian Pringle Speedy then followed the normal school pattern and he eventually left high school just at the outbreak of the World War II in Europe and took up a shepherd's job in the King Country of the North Island. Even though his parents were more than well off, I think this was akin to our modern gap-year or the older notion of young gentlemen being jackeroos for a while.

Initial Training Wing

Ian Speedy enlisted into the RNZAF on 30 November 1941 at Levin's Initial Training Wing (ITW), some 120km north of Wellington. There were a number of ITWs in the country and this one like the others was Ian's introduction to the military; medical, uniform issue, drills, shooting and military law. It also covered principles of flight but no flying, aero engines, armaments, basics of radio, photography, navigation, and aircraft and ship recognition. He joined Group V as an Airman Pilot under training and stayed here for three months and for another month at ITW Rotorua.

From Rotorua he went to Taieri near Dunedin and began his first flying at the No 1 Ele-

By
Max
Speedy



mentary Flying Training School. Here Ian did an eight-week course divided equally between learning to fly DH86 Tiger Moths (about 25 hours) and continuing his ground studies. Besides learning to fly, they were also trained in elementary map reading and pilot navigation. Successfully passing his elementary flying, and with 42 other hopefuls, Ian progressed to Service Flying Training School (Course 28B) in March 1942 for five months of more intensive flying training on Harvards.

Next, he moved on to No 2 (Fighter) Operational Training Unit, Course 4, at Ohakea, (NW of Palmerston North) flying the



**Airman Pilot Ian Speedy on RNZAF 28B
Pilots Course 11 May 1942**

aircraft he would eventually fly in combat – the Kittyhawk P-40E.² He spent six weeks converting to the Kittyhawk before being posted to 17(F) SQN, first based at Seagrove SW of Auckland, until June 1943 then to another base north of Auckland in preparation for a ferry flight north to the Pacific Island, Espiritu Santo.

Fighter Combat

Ian left NZ and arrived in Espiritu Santo as a passenger in a C-47 on 2 August 1943. For the next six weeks flying as wing man to each of the flight leaders, he practised the manoeuvres necessary in fighter combat. On 15 September he went with the squadron to Guadalcanal. On the first operational day, his CO, SQNLDR P. G. H. Newton walked home after bailing out of his aircraft.

A week later, three more P-40s were written off and another two badly damaged. Another Kiwi pilot in his enemy damaged aircraft nursed his plane to another island, bailed out and spent a month waiting to be rescued. But four Japanese Zekes had been shot down in this period though none by Ian³.

On 11 October while wing man in a group of eight P-40s, Ian had his first taste of air to air combat in which three Zeros were shot down by others in his group. Ian's CO, SQNLDR Newton made one of those claims.⁴ In late October, Ian's first tour was over and the squadron returned to NZ for a month's leave. Squadrons were generally rotated on a six-week basis: six weeks in training at Espiritu Santo, six in for-



Pilots photographed before take-off for Rabaul 19 December 1944

ward combat areas then NZ for some leave. At Guadalcanal the RNZAF did fighter protection duties, getting a fair share of the action doing so. In June 1943, 15(F) claimed four Zekes, and 14 (F) eleven and another fifteen in July. American claims for June were 101 enemy aircraft of varying types against 31 confirmed by post-war research. With 16(F) in operations in August, they claimed six enemy aircraft and 17 (F) the four noted above in September.

On 1 December 1943, in his own Kittyhawk with seven others and the company of the shepherding Hudsons, Ian flew from Auckland to Espiritu Santo for bomber escort, air to air firing, and ground attack practice. Two weeks later and with a new airfield at Torokina on the west of Bougainville on the beachhead⁵ separated only by dense jungle and a mountain ridge from another 38,000 Japanese,

17(F) SQN flew there via Guadalcanal. Rabaul was now only 200 miles to the north-west, 45 minutes away at cruise speed and plenty of fuel for combat while there. At Rabaul in its defence were 540 anti-aircraft guns, and 200 aircraft at five airfields, an estimated 56,000 troops and an-

other 5,500 on nearby New Ireland.

Rabaul and its harbour full of ships had been bombed a number of times from high flying aircraft but with radar giving up to an hour's warning, the Japanese were well prepared, fighters by the dozens already aloft and the bombs mostly ineffective. Lower level bombing with greater fighter protection was the key that the base

at Torokina now allowed.

The first major raid on Rabaul with Kiwis from 16(F) and 14(F) was on 17 December. Sixteen P-40s took part and claiming six Japanese aircraft but with the loss of two of their number. My father was busy on other air attacks at Espiritu Santo that day, some 950 miles away to the south. There was to have been a follow-up raid on Rabaul 18 December but bad weather prevented that. In a six hour flight with other pilots in a C-47, Ian was flown north to Ondonga (Russell Is. 50 miles North West of Guadalcanal).

Very early on 19 December, twelve P-40s left Ondonga, flew north to Torokina to refuel and then with another dozen P-40s from 16(F)⁶ rendezvoused with 41 B-24 American bombers at 17,000' en route for Rabaul. The Flak was heavy and the bombing seemed to have occurred without Japanese fighter interference but very quickly the Zekes were on the way. Only one was shot down but for the loss of another two pilots in 16(F). Ian and his compatriots flew for over six hours that day.

The photo on the top left and another photo with pilots from 16 (F) with the same aircraft (#66)



Empress Augusta Bay and Torokina with adjacent airfield



Ian Speedy alongside his Kittyhawk August 1943

was taken before take-off for Rabaul on 19 December. FLTSGT Ian Speedy is second left and the SQN CO, SQNLDR Newton, in shorts, is 7th left. Despite the one aircraft claimed, the raid was apparently most successful from the bombers' point of view.

Over the next twelve days, Ian flew a variety of eleven combat missions, strafing Japanese positions on the other side of the Torokina perimeter and another raid to Rabaul on 24 December where he claimed one Zeke confirmed and a second one damaged. The narrative from the post action report is as follows:

"I saw a Zeke above me at 2'o'clock. Pulling up, I fired a long burst from 100 yards, closing up to 50 yards before ceasing fire. I saw my tracer going right into it and, as I pulled up over him, I saw the Zeke fall away sharply with smoke coming from the cockpit. As he steepened his dive, I saw him become enveloped in flames. As I did a climbing turn, I saw a Zeke diving on my tail. I broke away to the right, pulled out very fast at 4000' and climbed straight up again to 6000'. I saw a Zeke in an easy climb crossing my path at the same altitude. Turning towards him, inside his turn, I opened fire at 150 yards and continued firing for three seconds as I followed him round. I saw my tracer going into him and he fell

sharply away to the right and went into a spin. I did not see him smoke. As I went on my own, I came out at 1500' from Blanche Bay north east of St George's Channel. On looking behind me, I saw a P-40 dive straight into the sea approximately midway between Sulphur and Raluana Points.⁷ The P-40 was definitely not on fire and I did not see a parachute in the vicinity. I saw a Zeke make a crash landing on a reef. The aircraft did not appear to be badly damaged and I saw the pilot get out. I immediately opened fire and saw the pilot fall into the water, but could not observe damage to the aircraft.⁸

Rudge then goes on to discuss the shooting of the Japanese airman and his aircraft on the reef. He notes that there was no extant policy except that destruction of the enemy on the ground as much as in the air was officially endorsed. But he then ends his argument on Ian citing the RAF, USAAF and Luftwaffe in Europe with "... there was a gentlemen's agreement that pilots should not shoot at an airman in a parachute or dinghy. Having escaped a damaged aircraft ... and survived it did not seem fair to be killed moments later." That may have been an idealisation of First World War aerial combat but it was not present in the total war of 1939 – 1945. Rudge himself (Ibid, P83)

describes six Zekes shooting at an Allied airman in a parachute on 7 June 1943.

Mr Rudge will have known about the tens of thousands of Allies killed in POW camps in the Pacific Theatre. He also was aware of the day to day experiences of all Allied pilots on the spot. They knew the unforgiving nature of warfare against the Japanese. In the European Theatre, war was being waged with a set of values not terribly different from the Pacific as AC Grayling describes at length in *Among the Dead Cities; The History and Moral Legacy of the WWII Bombing of Civilians in Germany and Japan*. In Europe, the war was just as brutal as in the Pacific. The chivalrous kings of yore had left the battle fields and retired to their palaces at least two centuries ago leaving their minions to fight on their behalf while the kings watched on.

My father's last tour of four. He is 1st left on the back row. Following his conversion to the Douglas Corsair F-4U back in NZ, a little time as an instructor, promotion to Warrant Officer, he then went back to Piva North, an airfield next to Torokina, on Bougainville Island. His tour with 22 (F) SQN lasted from 24 April until 15 July, only a few weeks before the end of the war. In that time he flew dozens of air to ground attacks. The Japanese air force had been destroyed but their army was still very active and fighting until the very last.

Ian had flown back to NZ with his squadron on 15 July and was demobilised on 8 August 1945. His combat flying was 260 hours in the P-40 Kittyhawk and 81 hours in the Corsair F-4U; all up over 340 hours in the thick of the Pacific War against the Japanese. In the ten months between May 1943 and February 1944, RNZAF fighter squadron pilots claimed 100 enemy aircraft destroyed and another 13 probable. At the same time, 21 Kiwi pilots lost their lives in this combat.

The first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima 3 August

1945. With the second atomic bomb on Nagasaki on 9 August, the Japanese surrendered on 15 August and the documents ratifying it were signed by the Japanese Foreign Minister on 2 September 1945 in Tokyo Bay.

Epilogue

I remember seeing my father in his RNZAF uniform just once, I was about five or six, it was 1949 or thereabouts so he was possibly at a reunion or similar as he had been demobbed since 1945. Not long after that as a family we came to Australia living in and around Brisbane.

I joined the Royal Australian Navy in 1962 and made my career flying first as an Observer in our new Westland Wessex Mk31A anti-submarine helicopter and not long after, went on pilot's course with the RAAF. Soon after getting my pilot's wings I ended up in Vietnam as a member of the US Army's 135th Assault Helicopter Company flying daily combat missions, getting shot at myself.

It was not until very recently that I really took an interest in what my father had done but I had nothing to go on. I remember his flying log book and numerous photos he had taken while on active service plus the certificates for his Zeke and the half share of another. But his log book and much of our family's belongings were lost in a fire around 1963. The only original photo, and I still have it, is one of him at Espiritu Santo in his flying gear soon after he had arrived on his first tour with 17(F).

And then Rufus Anderson came along and saved the day – he and his father before him have done an amazing public service in collecting the stories of the WW II pilots of the RNZAF. Had it not been for their amazing efforts I would never have had what is the re-creation of my father's wartime flying log. The day-by-day detail is exceptional and I am most grateful for their work. Their narrative about him and those he was with gives a clear story of just how tough it was in those perilous

days when Japan seemed to be unstoppable.

Ian Pringle Speedy passed away quietly in November 2011 at the age of 89, not too troubled I hope by his wartime service. He would never speak about it, no detail small or large.

References

These days, the internet seems to have something about everything and the references to the RNZAF, while sparse compared to the US in the Pacific, are still most valuable. Then there is the NZ Air Force Museum and their archives: the range, quality and clarity of their photos is brilliant. And David Homewood of Wings Over NZ has been ever happy to find extra information for me.

My references to distances and so on across this vast area are only approximate. No good purpose would have been served to have been accurate in one system or another when talking about thousands of miles, statute or nautical. Google Earth was used as necessary.

Four books were the major sources for my take on this war.

Bryan Cox, *Too Young To Die; the Story of a New Zealand fighter pilot in the Pacific War*, Century Hutchison, 1987.

A.C. Grayling, *Among the Dead Cities; The History and Moral Legacy of the WWII Bombing of Civilians in Germany and Japan*, Walker & Co., 2006.

Alex Horn, *Wings Over the Pacific, The RNZAF in the Pacific Air War*, Random Century, 1992.

Chris Rudge, *Air-To-Air, the Story behind the air-to-air combat claims of the RNZAF*, Adventure Air, 2003.

Notes:

¹ A very complicated story which I never got to the bottom of but full of intrigue!

² There were many models of the Kittyhawk, mostly to do with up-graded engines and weight reductions including gun combinations. By the end of 1944, over 13,700

had been built.

³ The P-40's main shortcomings were poor ammunition quality causing many stoppages. The gun-sight (Curtis Assembly 87-69-964) was an optical sight only that allowed the pilot to focus on the enemy and a gun bore dot – he still had to calculate aim off which was why high approach angles – beam and quarter attacks – were difficult so stern attacks were always preferred. It wasn't until the Douglas Corsair F-4U entered service in late 1943 that gyro gunsights came into service and RNZAF 22(F) Corsair SQN may have had them. The Japanese Mitsubishi A6M Zeke/Zero turned far tighter than the P-40. The "Zero" came from its association with the Imperial Japanese calendar, zero being the year 1940.

⁴ I have used the word "claims" rather than "kills" as much of this detailed information has come from Chris Rudge's accounts in *Air-To-Air, The story behind the air-to-air combat claims of the RNZAF*, where he corroborates the claims of the opposing sides with latter day research. Gun cameras were not available and different pilots could claim the same aircraft. With as many as 100 aircraft in a mêlée, it was easy to overestimate.

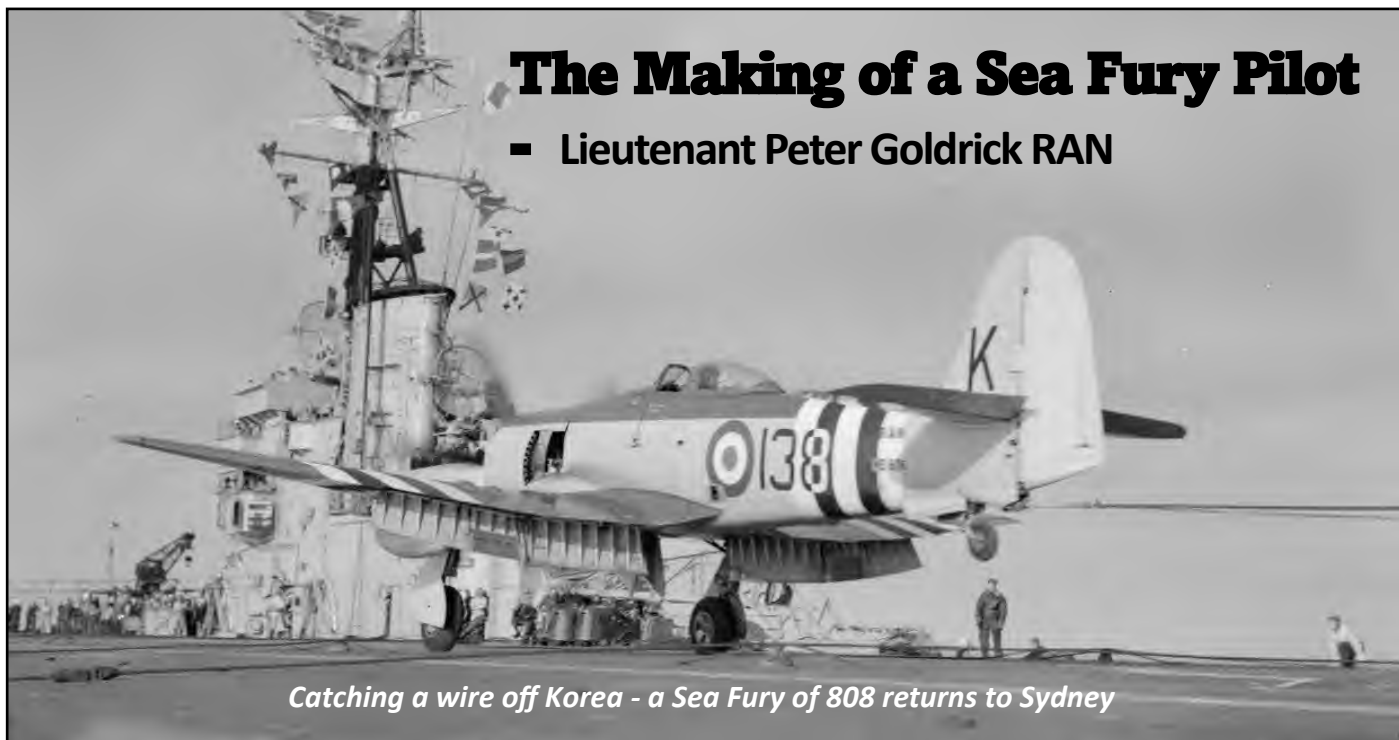
⁵ The perimeter around Torokina at this time was about 8000 yards along the beach and 5000 inland. The airfield was 1500 yards long by 40 wide. Not at all secure as was proved many times.

⁶ Six of these turned back for various reasons, leaving eighteen P-40s that went to Rabaul.

⁷ These places are about 5 miles south east of Rabaul town, essentially in the middle of the harbour and enemy territory. Ian's claims are for the two aerial encounters while the pilot and aircraft on the reef were not counted.

The Making of a Sea Fury Pilot

■ Lieutenant Peter Goldrick RAN



Catching a wire off Korea - a Sea Fury of 808 returns to Sydney

By Graeme Lunn

On 5 January 1952 at 1000 Lieutenant Peter Goldrick of 808 Squadron was catapulted off HMAS *Sydney* in a Sea Fury XI armed with 4x20mm cannon and loaded with 8x60lb rockets. The carrier was at Point Oboe, 40 miles off the Korean coast from Inchon. It was his second launch that bitter winter morning having already flown a Combat Air Patrol over the Task Force from 0700-0850. The weather was cold enough to wrap a scarf around the exposed skin above the tight rubber neck seal of his immersion suit. Sailing from Kure, Japan, 28 December 1951 this was *Sydney's* sixth patrol since arriving in the Korean Theatre with her Carrier Air Group of 805 (Sea Fury), 808 (Sea Fury) and 817 (Firefly) Squadrons. It was Peter's eleventh sortie of the patrol and his flight had been briefed for an Armed Reconnaissance to strike gun positions along the Yesong River.

North Korean forces had invaded across the 38th parallel 25 June 1950 and plunged south until halted at the Pusan Perimeter. The UN break-out and subsequent landing at Inchon mid-September 1950 had pushed further north, occupied the North Korean capital Pyongyang, and reached the Yalu River border with Manchuria in places. Through the winter blizzards two Chinese armies crossed

from Manchuria and forced back the United Nations Command troops. By September 1951 the latest UN offensive was essentially static, holding near the 38th parallel and only fighting for local tactical advantages. Armistice negotiations commenced at Panmunjom 25 October 1951 and General Ridgeway halted offensive ground operations. As the second harsh winter of the conflict froze the ground there was active defence only along the trenches of the 155-mile front.

At sea the navies of nine nations blockaded North Korea, and the carrier aircraft of three of those navies, in conjunction with UN Air Forces, conducted an interdiction campaign. With *Sydney's* entry into theatre 3 October 1951 the RAN became only the fourth navy (after the Royal Navy, Imperial Japanese Navy and United State Navy) to ever send a carrier into combat.



Rear Admiral Scott-Moncrieff transferring from HMAS Sydney to the C-class destroyer HMS Comus via a Jackstay transfer

On 5 January 1952 the selected aircrew had been personally briefed by the Task Group Commander Rear Admiral Scott-Moncrieff DSO* RN for these attacks along the Yesong River in a zone normally off-limits to strikes. On the north side of the Han River estuary the two targets were close to the neutral area around Panmunjom where the acrimonious peace negotiations were stalled. While the seniority of the briefer would have highlighted the importance of the strikes, the aircrew needed no further encouragement to press home their attacks.

The sorties Peter flew, with their obvious hazards, are abbreviated in his logbook and benefit from explanation. Looking at just four days in October 1951:

23 Oct

'Junk Run 2:15' - a coastal strike to sink any enemy seaborne vessels found.

'RESCAP off Chinnampo 3:15' - a lengthy Rescue Combat Air Patrol overhead the ditching location of USAF pilot 1st Lt Biessner who was picked up by the frigate HMAS *Murchison* from the mined waters.

24 Oct

'Strike Han River - Box Cars Sinchon 2:15' - attacking any targets on or in the river near Seoul and then heading north to disrupt railway movements around Sinchon.

25 Oct

'Close Air Support (CAS) C.O. Hit 2:25' - CAS for Commonwealth troops during which the flight leader's aircraft was badly damaged by flak. Lieutenant-Commander 'Apples' Appleby managed to land at Kimpo Air Base.



Lieutenant Peter Goldrick RAN at RAAF Williamtown 1954

The same day Lieutenant Wheatley was hit by flak and ditched.

26 Oct

'Rocket Projectile (RP) Han River & A.R. Knappy Down 2:35' - after attacking targets in and along the Han River with RPs Peter's flight continued on an Armed Reconnaissance with Sub-Lieutenant Knappstein who suffered flak damage and crash landed on mud flats in the estuary. He was rescued by HMS *Amethyst*.

'R/P Haeju. Spotting for Ceylon 1:55' - strafing with rockets at Haeju followed by Naval Gunfire Support spotting for the 12x6" guns of HMS *Ceylon*.

An oft quoted figure is the shared record (with HMS *Glory*) of 89 sorties in a day from a light fleet carrier that *Sydney* achieved 11 October 1951. What is most commendable about this is not the



Sea Fury, possibly WE679-138/K of 808 Sqn RAN flown by SBLT (P) Smith RN was hit by gunfire and forced landed wheels up on the beach at Paengyong-Do on 7 December 1951

number, but that it was reached on only her fifth day of operations. Peter flew three of those sorties which included a CAP, Strikes and spotting for the cruiser HMS *Belfast*. HMS *Ocean*, in the longer daylight hours of May 1952, achieved a record 123 sorties by sending off the first 'Event A' wave of aircraft well before dawn.

The patrol statistics are a stark indication of the aircrew's mettle. Of the 38 aircraft embarked, the fourth patrol from 18 - 30 November 1951 saw them hit by flak 43 times, while 4 were lost. On the fifth patrol 6 - 18 December 1951, even though it included some days of 'boring' convoy escort, 25 aircraft were hit and 5 destroyed. During *Sydney's* seven patrols and 43 days of flight operations the CAG flew 743 Firefly and 1623 Sea Fury sorties. 99 aircraft were damaged by flak and 13 lost with 9 shot down. Over half a million 20mm cannon shells and 8655 rockets were fired with 1162 bombs delivered. In retrospect it seems incredible that only three aircrew were killed.

We do not know how Peter celebrated his 24th birthday and then Christmas in Kure, but we can be sure that on 5 January 1952 he would have been totally focussed on his aircraft and mission. The Sea Fury was the fastest single engined piston fighter ever produced and, like any front line aircraft, unforgiving when mishandled - any inattention or distraction would kill you, war or no war! As the flight headed east for their Armed Reconnaissance of Han-



Preparing for a Seafire flight—Peter Goldrick

chon, Peter was fast approaching the end of his Korean active service.

When Peter pulled out of his last attack run against the Communist gun sites shortly after 1100 a bullet hit the cockpit and went through his right arm and into his upper body. Feeling he had been 'hit by a sledgehammer' Peter managed to maintain control of the aircraft using his injured arm. Flying in shock and pain his aircraft was shepherded back to the carrier by the other Sea Furys. Character, moulded by **discipline**, and handling skills honed by intense **training**, enabled Peter to survive the next 30 minutes **to fly another day**. Two significant imponderables were also at play that morning - his innate pilot's **luck**, and a **girl** he wanted to make it home for!



Airman (O) C Smythers with 500 lb bomb on flight deck of Sydney off Korea. IWM image

Discipline shaped by the practicalities of wartime rigour had produced an officer of quiet firmness who could always see humour in a situation. Cadet Midshipman Goldrick joined the Royal Australian Naval College in January 1941 having just turned 13. Coming from St Aloysius' College in Milson's Point, with its Jesuit traditions, he had joined a service institution that believed early novitiate style moulding of the boy cadet would produce a dutiful, efficient and self-disciplined naval officer.

Made Midshipman in September 1944 Peter was posted to the British Eastern Fleet in the Indian Ocean where, after passage from Australia in the cruiser HMS *Suffolk*, he joined the cruiser HMS *Kenya* on 29 November. Having commenced his active service at 16, Peter turned 17 the day *Kenya* arrived in Calcutta to begin supporting the Burma campaign. Posted on 16 April 1945 to the Home Fleet and the cruiser HMS *Birmingham*, he was onboard when she took the surrender of *Prinz Eugen* and *Nurnberg* on 6 May 1945. After VE Day 8 May 1945 the cruiser took allied troops to Trondheim to round up the German troops still at large in Norway. He later served in the destroyer HMS *Offa*.

Coming ashore to England on 16 May 1946 as an Acting Sub-Lieutenant, Peter studied for his many promotion courses before returning to Australia in 1947 and his first RAN ship, another cruiser, *Hobart*. As a Sub-Lieutenant of the Executive Branch it was soon time to submit his preferences for specialisation. The Five Year Defence Plan confirming a Fleet Air Arm for the RAN was announced by the Minister for Defence, the Honourable John Dedman



Sea Fury on Flight Deck HMAS Sydney during winter in Korea

4 June 1947. On 10 June, Peter requested Pilot's course on completion of his seaman qualifications.

He was posted to HMAS *Warramunga* on 10 November 1947 and the destroyer sailed to join the British Commonwealth Occupation Forces in Japanese waters. Peter was awarded his Bridge Watch-keeping Certificate on his 20th birthday, 20 December 1947, by Commander G Oldham DSC (who commanded *Sydney* during her post cease-fire second cruise off Korea and was an experienced Observer). '*Little Mo*', as she was known to her crew, arrived back in Sydney in April 1948. After leave Peter, matured beyond his years by service experience and discipline, sailed for the United Kingdom and Pilots course on 29 May 1948.

Training of a particularly demanding nature produced the naval aviator that Peter became. To meet the manpower needs of the proposed RAN Carrier

Air Groups three main streams of aircrew were commenced. No. 1 Naval Airman Pilots Course of new entries and selected ratings graduated from RAAF Point Cook 29 July 1949 and proceeded to the UK for operational conversions. From the considerable pool of demobilised World War II pilots the selected ex RAAF, RNVR and RNZVR pilots started their six month Naval Orientation at HMAS *Cerberus* on 6 February 1948 before also proceeding to the UK. This group included a number transferred from the RAAF in late 1944 as acting and/or probationary Lieutenants (A) or Sub-Lieutenants (A) RANVR for service with the British Pacific Fleet, a plan curtailed by VJ



Flight deck maintenance as Sydney steams to the patrol area off Korea. Fireflies starboard side and Sea Furys port side. IWM image



First group of RAN pilots training at HMAS Cerberus prior to embarkation to the UK

day. They had their appointments terminated in 1946. Some, such as John 'Nat' Gould, were offered a four year Short Service Commission with the RN FAA. Most were reappointed in 1948 to the RAN with original seniority.

The third, and smallest, stream were those seaman officers choosing to sub-specialise in the new branch of aviation. To them it promised an exciting future career in the mooted multi-carrier navy. The RAN at this embryonic stage was almost totally beholden to the advanced training capacity of the RN Fleet Air Arm. A newly promoted Lieutenant Goldrick reported to HMS *Merlin*, Naval Air Station Donibristle in Fifeshire for his Pre-Flight Ground school on 8 July 1948. In the following 12 weeks Peter studied hard. From the Theory of Flight to Aviation Meteorology, whether learning the vagaries of pressure instruments or the intricacies of piston engines, it was academically demanding.

It would have been with anticipation that Peter arrived at No. 22 Flight Training School at RAF Syerston in Nottinghamshire. Here was the Naval All-Through School where the RAF was responsible for training naval pilots to 'Wings' standard. There was a resident Senior Naval Officer, the Chief Ground Instructor was RN and about one third of the instructors were navy.

The flying was divided into a six month Basic Flying Course and a six month Advanced Course. Flying Officer Hotchkiss took Peter on his first flight in a Tiger Moth on 7 October 1948. Proving a

quick student, Hotchkiss sent Peter solo eight days later after 6:30 hrs dual instruction. With 50 Moth hours completed it was then time to move on to the Advanced Course flying the Harvard. Hotchkiss remained his instructor but Peter's 30 hour check was a naval one with Lieutenant W.I. Campbell. In April 1949, after 105 hours flying, his instructor was changed to Lieutenant Raleigh. In a small taste of things to come on 15 August 1949 he practiced dive bombing in the Harvard. The Final Handling or Wings test by Squadron Leader Macgregor came in September after 200 hours, and Peter was awarded his flying badge (provisional) with effect from 29 September 1949.

Operational Flying School was initially at HMS *Fulmar*, Naval Air Station Lossiemouth in Morayshire. This was the students introduction to a more demanding service type aircraft with an emphasis on safe handling whether flying on instruments, in formation or navigating. For Peter his OFS 1 Strike Course commenced 12 October 1949 with ground instruction on type and he was airborne 18 October in a Firefly I with Lieutenant Blakemore. No time was wasted with 6 dual sorties in two days before being sent solo late in the afternoon of the 19th. To embed the vital instinctive muscle memory the following weeks were equally intensive with up to 4 sorties a day. On 12 November 1949 with 242 hours logged, Peter was sent solo in a Seafire XV.

Suffering a high loss rate operating with the assault carriers in the Mediterranean in 1943 and 1944



The first group of pilots and observers to head off to the UK for Gannet training in 1955. Sitting left to right - Peter Goldrick SP 816, 'Snow O'Connell' CO 816 (first observer to command a squadron) and Norman Lee AWI 816. Standing - Leonard Anderson 820

the Seafire was by 1949 no longer a front line fighter. Home Fleet CAG's operated Sea Furys and, while the Mediterranean CAGs had Seafire's, these were the Seafire 47 with the Griffon engine, folding wings and contra-rotating propellers. Flying the single seat Seafire XV and XVII Peter learnt battle formations and wing drills with their accompanying interceptions and attacks. The Seafire being single seat, all IF training was flown dual in a Firefly. Peter finished the Strike Course 16 January 1950 with 42 hours in the Firefly I and 39 hours in the Seafire.

Moving to the Air Fighter School HMS *Gannet*, Naval Air Station Eglinton in County Londonderry, Peter joined OFS 2 Fighter Course 17 January 1950, still flying the Seafire XVII. More attacks, deflection shooting, ranging and strafing were now the order of the day. Several months of illness from early February, however, saw Peter 'Reflighted'. On 26 April 1950 he was at HMS *Seahawk*, Naval Air Station Culdrose in Cornwall to continue his OFS 2 Fighter Course.

It was here, on 2 May 1950, that Peter first flew a Sea Fury XI. Fighter combat was assessed by cine camera. Live rocket firings and strafing at the Treligga Range were highlights and close formation would have become

second nature. Then, on 19 May 1950, Peter was introduced to what would become a routine part of his naval flying - the ADDL's. Aerodrome Dummy Deck Landings were practiced on a specially marked runway with a control caravan where the carrier's island would be. The training system allocated at least one month for Deck Landing Training. Notably, USN batting signals had been adopted on 1 December 1948.

After logging 111 ADDL's Peter flew from Culdrose to the Training Carrier *Illustrious* on 10 July 1950. Staying onboard overnight he achieved the 8 deck landings which meant his provisional wings were now permanently attached to his sleeve. Rated "an average and reliable student fighter pilot" Peter was given a B pass after 71 hours on Sea Furys and 384 hours total.

Lieutenant Peter Goldrick joined 808 Squadron of the 21st Carrier Air Group on 21 July 1950 at HMS *Vulture*, Naval Air Station St. Merryn in Cornwall. On 23 July 1950 the CAG flew a Balbo or maximum effort sortie over *Sydney* as she arrived back in UK waters after delivering 805 and 816 Squadrons to Australia. He landed aboard her for the first time on 31 August 1950 and the carrier sailed again for Australia on 26 October with 808 and 817 Squadrons embarked.

At least 12 months in an operational squadron concentrating on Weapons and Tactical Training



Naval armourers R. Lilly and K. Pascoe fix rockets to a Sea Fury prior to a mission



Hawker Seafury 109/K of 805 Squadron running up on the deck of HMAS Sydney, Korea 1951

were necessary before a pilot was considered fully operational. Disembarking at HMAS *Albatross*, Naval Air Station Nowra, on 6 December 1950 the work-up of 808 Squadron proceeded ashore and afloat. Squadron training was given extra urgency from May 1951 when the *Sydney* CAG was formed with active service in the offing. *Sydney* headed north for Korea 31 August 1951.

Luck for an aviator in the inherently high risk environment of carrier operations was an enviable commodity and Peter undeniably had it. It was strongly demonstrated in July 1951 when embarked again for pre-deployment work up in *Sydney*. The entry in his logbook reads with a hint of laconic humour: 17 July 'D.L.P. Splash 0:05'

Peter had launched for the fourth time that day for more Deck Landing Practice to add to his 50 total. Mishandling in the last seconds of the approach he overpitched at the rounddown. This caused the aircraft to briefly climb as the left wing dropped and his Sea Fury drifted sideways. Landing heavily at that angle, with drift on, the port oleo sheared away and the aircraft slewed violently, missed the barrier, and went over the port side into the sea. Escaping from his submerged aircraft the watching spectators swore that the carrier must have passed over him as he was seen to surface on the starboard side of the wake to be picked up by the plane guard destroyer HMAS *Anzac*. Peter himself saw the shadow of the carrier passing overhead and delayed getting out of the cockpit until it was clear. Peter had hit the flight deck, though, so he had no hesitation at entering it as his 51st deck landing.

On the 5 January 1952 when duty and chance put his aircraft, arm and body in the way of that Chinese bullet Peter's luck held strong. Secured to the starboard shelf in his cockpit was a heavy message bag with a streamer attached. Weighted with lead shot this was a recent innovation allowing a message to be dropped to downed aircrew. The bullet expended most of its energy smashing through airframe and that lead shot before passing through his arm without hitting the bone, and did not penetrate to any vital organs when it lodged in his chest. Despite the trauma to his upper arm, and bleeding from three wounds, Peter was still able to hold the controls, fly back to *Sydney* at Point Oboe, and manoeuvre steadily for his 139th deck landing at 1140, 100 minutes after he had launched.

Pulled out of the cockpit his immersion suit was cut away as he was triaged on the flight deck before being rushed down to the carrier's sick bay and the further ministrations of Surgeon Commander R.E. Lauder, RN. After the arm of his wool sweater was cut off, Peter was slightly embarrassed that the SBAs then had to cut through the arm of his pyjamas rather than the issued thermal long johns. That first briefing had been quite early after all! Through all this Peter held onto his scarf.

Scott-Moncrieff, back onboard his flagship *Bel-fast* signalled:

Thank you for my interesting day. Good luck in all your doings and hope Goldrick gets on alright - Please give him my congrats on a fine effort.

A girl named Caroline Purcell had knitted the scarf Peter was wearing that freezing January morning. Peter had met the then 13 year old Caroline in 1944 when he was 16 and with a friend who was visiting her older sister. Four years later they met again at a Sydney University dance when she was 16 and he was 20. The budding romance was put in a holding pattern when he left for aircrew training in the UK. They agreed to date others but Peter asked her to promise not to get engaged to anyone else until his return to Australia. When they met up again in December 1950 the bond between them was soon stronger than ever. Unofficially engaged when he sailed for Korea Peter took a scarf Caroline had knitted for him and promised to bring it home - a promise he kept!

When Peter was able to write up the sortie in his logbook, now showing 699:15 total flying hours, it was a characteristically succinct: 5 Jan "A.R. Hanchon Shot 1:40"

A clerk in Navy Office signalled the ship to cease Lieutenant Goldrick's Flying Pay since he was now unfit and off the flying roster. Mutinous rumbles from the CAG and terse return signals to Australia by Captain Harries rapidly squashed that ill-thought demand. Peter was evacuated to Australia 21 January 1952 on a QANTAS Skymaster. At the airport he dodged the waiting reporters and refused all interview requests. Peter was quietly recuperating with his family when he and Caroline announced their engagement.



Peter and Caroline on their wedding day with Lieutenant George 'Spanky' Brown DFC, Peter's best man behind.



The first RAN Vampire delivered to 723 Squadron by Peter Goldrick on 18 June 1954 taxiing past a Sea Fury at NAS Nowra

To Fly Another Day was any aviators wish, junior or senior, bored after an inclement day of playing Uckers in a squadron crew room or languishing at a Navy Office desk. Or in Peters case, while awaiting wounds to heal and convincing the Medical Board that he was again CatA1 fit to fly. Recovering quickly Peter talked himself back into a Sea Fury only seven weeks later. Getting airborne on 27 February 1952 for local flying he could not resist some aerobatics in celebration.

Peter was at *Albatross* to greet 808 Squadron when they disembarked on 3 April 1952. Peter and Caroline were married 24 June 1952 at St. Canice's Church, Elizabeth Bay, and his best man was fellow 808 Squadron wingman Lieutenant 'Spanky' Brown DFC.

Peter Goldrick became one of the first two RAN Qualified Flying Instructors (No.8 Course CFS, RAAF East Sale) later that year instructing at RAAF Uranquinty. Going solo in a Vampire 30 at RAAF Williamtown on 9 April 1954, Peter became the first RAN pilot to fly jets in Australia, although others had flown jets earlier while with the RN. He then delivered the first RAN Vampire to 723 Squadron to train converting Sea Fury pilots on 18 June 1954.

During Peter's aviation career he flew everything from a Lincoln to a Whirlwind, and operated from *Vengeance* and *Melbourne* as well as *Sydney*. By the time Peter retired as a Captain in 1977 he had commanded 816 (Gannet) and 725 (Gannet/Dakota) Squadrons, the Frigate *Stuart* and the shore establishment HMAS *Penguin*. His son, James, joined the Royal Australian Naval College in 1974.

On 2 August 2002, fifty years after that frozen January morning over Korea, Captain Peter Goldrick RAN (Rtd) died.

China to Build 'Nuclear' Aircraft Carrier



This display at the Military Museum of the Chinese People's Revolution (China's official military museum) in 2016 shows a nuclear-powered carrier (Type 004) with stealthy unmanned combat aerial vehicles

The People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) have decided on nuclear propulsion for its aircraft carrier Type 004 now at the design phase. Photographs confirm that the PLAN has already launched one conventional carrier in the 90,000

-ton range (Type 003) named *Fujian* on 17 June 2022. The launch of the carrier around the PLAN's 73rd anniversary on 23 April 2022 was delayed due to a surge in Covid-19 in Shanghai. It is understood the intention is that the Chinese Navy have up to ten (10)

aircraft carriers by 2030.

The Type 004 is a planned aircraft carrier of the PLAN naval aviation programme. It is intended to be an iteration on the preceding Type 003 aircraft carrier, but like the Type 003, it will feature an integrated electric propul-



Chinese Aircraft Carrier (Type 003) named 'Fujian' launched on 17 June 2022. The ship is a conventional carrier around the size of the USS Kitty Hawk Class. Gross Tonnage estimated near 90,000 tons

sion system that will allow the operation of EMALS (Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System).¹ Unlike the conventionally-powered Type 003, the Type 004 will be larger and also the first Chinese carrier to feature nuclear marine propulsion,⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾ which could generate enough electricity to power laser weapons and railguns currently under development.⁽³⁾ It is expected to be completed by the late 2020s, with up to four planned to be built.⁽⁴⁾

With the possibility of China having a military presence in the Solomon Islands, the Defence of Australia becomes more pressing and operations of F-35Bs from the RAN's LHDs become more apparent following the discussions in previous issues of *Slipstream*. China has taken huge steps forward in the past decade in aircraft carrier acquisition and modification of the old Soviet carriers. The first of these to come into service with the PLAN was the Type 001 *Liaoning* created from three Soviet carri-



J15 Arresting aboard the Shandong

ers the *Kiev*, *Minsk* and *Varyag*. It was joined later by Type 002 *Shandong* built in China without parts from other ships. China is now following up with the Type 003 — a conventional carrier using conventional propulsion, along with a series of technological advances such as an EMALS catapult system.

It is unclear how many Type 003 carriers the PLAN will build, although a one-off would be uncharacteristic of Chinese shipbuilding. It makes sense that the PLAN would want a pair of ships; operating the CATOBAR (Catapult Assisted Take-Off But Arrested Recovery). Type 003 carriers will require a significantly different skill set than the first two, and it will be easier to produce that skill set with two

carriers rather than one. Besides, the construction of only a single carrier could make that ship unique, sitting uneasily in China's larger strategic plan.

On the other hand, some reports have suggested that China will take the nuclear leap for its fourth carrier the Type 004. However, the Type 003 carriers will be the first ships since the 1950s built anywhere in the world to rival the largest, most powerful U.S. supercarriers capable of carrying more than 70 aircraft. It remains unclear what kind of aircraft the Type 003 might fly, but a next generation of fighters and drones (the former based on the J-31 stealth fighter) should be available by the time the first Type 003 takes to the sea.¹

Depending on a few strategic factors, nuclear power could make sense for the PLAN. Unlike the U.S. Navy (USN), the PLAN does not yet have access to a bewildering array of bases and maintenance facilities that could keep a carrier battle group in fighting trim. Similarly, the PLAN lacks the experience of the USN in long-range underway replenishment. A nuclear carrier doesn't solve these problems—escorts will still need fuel, and the air group will still burn through equipment and fuel at a high rate—but a carrier that can travel long distances without refuelling can help on the margins.

The other reason that nuclear power could be useful is the potential for huge power generation. Projections suggest



J31 expected to operate off China's Nuclear Carrier along with the Xian KJ-600 airborne early warning and control aircraft, and anti-submarine warfare aircraft

that this will increasingly become a requirement for advanced warships, as they will depend upon lasers and other power-hungry systems for defensive and offensive weapons. It is conceivable, if testing and development go well, that China's first nuclear carrier could carry lasers, railguns and other such advanced equipment.

The Type 004 would likely carry a complement of J-15 and J-31 fighters, Xian KJ-600 airborne early warning and control aircraft, anti-submarine warfare aircraft of the People's Liberation Army Naval Air Force, and stealth attack drones.⁽⁵⁾

It was previously suggested that the aircraft carrier could carry J-20 aircraft.⁽³⁾ However, in a programme on China Central Television, PLA Navy Rear Admiral Zhang Zhaozhong dismissed the possibility that the aircraft would be used on aircraft carriers as the aircraft was not structurally designed to cope with carrier operations.⁽⁶⁾ In addition, it does not have folding wings for compact storage, and its stealth coating would be susceptible to degradation while at sea.⁽⁶⁾

With respect to strategic rationale, China's maritime lines of communication lie in the Pacific and Indian Oceans. In the latter especially, China faces potentially hostile foreign powers (India, France the United Kingdom) on turf that geographically favours those countries. As the core of a task force made of cruisers, destroyers and nuclear attack submarines, a Type 003 carrier could offer a formidable presence—likely more formidable than that of any navy besides the USN. Moreover, as U.S. experience has demonstrated, large aircraft carriers are extremely flexible platforms, and can support all manner of expeditionary operations beyond their intended functions. Big decks with big reactors offer a nation reliable tool for resolving its security concerns.⁽⁷⁾

More than a generation ago, some analysts predicted that the Soviet Union might build aircraft carriers to rival the largest ships in the U.S. Navy. This would have represented a natural progression from helicopter carriers to V/STOL (vertical and/or short take-off and landing) carriers, to ski-jump carriers and finally to genuine CATOBAR supercarriers. Even the Soviets bought into the idea, putting together plans for massive carriers that could have challenged the USN on the high seas. However, it was not to be. The Soviet Union collapsed, and its naval ambitions collapsed with it.⁷

The type 001 aircraft carrier *Liaoning* has been spotted in recent months in the Pacific operating J-15s in exercises with a large carrier group of ships. With a moving platform, the Chinese will be able to position their carriers outside the range of shore based aircraft, especially in the South Pacific and Indian Ocean where countries do not have carrier borne fixed-wing fighter aircraft. The experience demonstrated with the UK in the Falklands in protecting its carriers from the Argentinians is an example. Australia will need to rethink defence strategy with the development of Chinese Naval Aviation.

Acknowledgements:

¹ *Roblin, Sebastien (1 May 2017). "The Real Reason the World Needs to Pay Attention to China's Growing Aircraft Carrier Fleet". The National Interest. Centre for the National Interest.*

² *Mizokami, Kyle (7 September 2018). "Inside China's Plan to Build the Second-Biggest Aircraft Carrier Fleet in the World". Foxtrot Alpha. Jalopnik.*

³ *Lin, Jeffrey Lin; Singer, P.W. (16 August 2017). "China's making major progress with its aircraft carrier tech". Popular Science.*

⁴ *"What China's Aircraft Carrier Means for its Naval Defence Capabilities | GRI". 2 June 2017.*

⁵ *Lin, Jeffrey Lin; Singer, P.W. (6 March 2018). "A Chinese shipbuilder accidentally revealed its major navy plans". Popular Science.*

⁶ *"PLA Admiral rejects talk of J-20 fighters on aircraft carriers". Asia Times. 24 November 2017.*

⁷ *China Building 'Nuclear' Aircraft Carriers: Could the Navy's Worst Nightmare Come True? Robert Farley – The National Interest 5 May 2018*



OUR
CONTINUING
STORY



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The Australian War Memorial needs your help to develop our collections relating to recent conflicts, peacekeeping and humanitarian and disaster relief operations.

The Australian War Memorial is embarking on a development project to transform our galleries and renew our exhibitions. We will be sharing the stories of a new generation of Australian men and women who have served our nation in recent conflicts, and on peacekeeping and humanitarian and disaster relief operations.

We are interested in hearing the stories of those who served and building our collections around these conflicts and operations. We are seeking to collect a wide range of significant material, including uniforms, personal items reflecting the experience of service, photographs, video footage, artworks, letters and diaries.

Areas of interest:

Middle East region operations:

- Gulf War
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- Iraq War
- Northern Iraq and Syria

Australian Peacekeeping operations, including:

- Rwanda
- Somalia
- Cambodia
- East Timor
- Solomon Islands
- Bougainville

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If you have stories or items to share from your experiences in recent conflicts or operations, our curators would like to hear from you. Get in touch by emailing

gallerydevelopment@awm.gov.au



Keeping the F-35B Dream Alive!

You do great work with *Slipstream*. Thanks for keeping the F-35B dream alive. Probably now the RAN LHDs will be too long in the tooth for modification or operation of F-35Bs in our future.

I look forward to the Chinese Navy in the Solomon Islands compelling the ADF to pursue an aircraft carrier or two with Ski Jump with F-35Bs in lieu of a conventional aircraft carrier. A Ski Jump carrier would make the RAAF (with RAN exchange) pilots carrier landing job a lot easier (much like the UK 'Lightning Force' RN/RAF team).

Yes it is amazing how such a useful asset as "Oz F-35Bs on Oz LHDs" will not only extend the defence of our long coastline but an area of responsibility that gets overlooked by more RAAF bias dialogue. But as you suggest the F-35 variants are just excellent for all kinds of uses, including putting ship weapons accurately on target. Why we don't hear more about this 'within the networked ADF' is also beyond me. Maybe it is a big secret but I suspect - as always - the RAAF want to keep it all to themselves. The Chinese Navy aviation development will wake the ADF up big time as it continues on this task.

Phil Thompson (ex-A4 pilot)

Memories Return

The photo of Peter Seed (March issue of *Slipstream*) brought back memories with LCDR Peter Seed then Commanding Officer 808 Squadron.

In early 1957 the crew of 'handlers' in HMAS *Sydney* were exchanged/drafted to HMAS *Melbourne*. Another handler, Ron "Bluey" Sedgwick and myself were drafted to *Melbourne* scoring 808 squadron. Beauty, 'we thought' as the *Melbourne* was off for another trip up top. How good was this? But this was not to be for 808 squadron, as it had been grounded back at HMAS *Albatross* (NAS Nowra). Cracks had been found in the main frames of the aircraft and modifications were necessary.

The Sea Venoms were made by De Haviland and

this company had a manufacturing facility at Bankstown airport. So a small problem presented itself, in how do we get the aircraft to Bankstown for these modifications? The first option was to fly the planes to Bankstown, but the runway at Bankstown may prove to be too short for the Sea Venoms. So LCDR Seed was seconded to experiment with landing/take offs of a Sea Venom in the shortest possible length. It was a very 'risky' evolution, resulting in heavy braking ruining the brake discs (at a reputed \$8000 per disc). LCDR Seed also tested shorter take offs. These were nothing short of spectacular for the Sea Venom. When a test was due, the whole squadron would go out to watch the take off. My stay on 808 squadron proved to be very short, so I don't actually know how the modifications of the Sea Venoms ended up.

I was the squadron driver, and would often drive LCDR Seed home to Huskisson. I was always amazed at how relaxed he seemed to be. It was like driving a jelly!! In all the time I was involved with him at the squadron, I never recall him raising his voice to anyone. He seemed to be a real gentleman.

Mick Tattersell

Aircraft Handler 54/60

75th Anniversary Open Day Postponed

Please be advised that after careful deliberation of the weather forecast on 3 July, the FAA 75th Anniversary Open Day had to be postponed. I could not put our people or those of the community at risk, and equally we would not have been able to highlight the full profile of the FAA, RAN and ADF here at HMAS *Albatross*. Thankfully all is not lost, and we will harness the work undertaken to conduct the Open Day in conjunction with celebrations later in the year.

Craig Castle

CMDR RAN

Chief of Staff

COMFAA

From the Editor's Desk

I must apologise in the lateness of the June issue of *Slipstream*. What I thought was going to be a relaxing time visiting our sons in Melbourne became a somewhat different story.



The trip began with the excitement of our son flying us Adelaide to Melbourne on an evening flight. He'd advised me the day before that it was a pity his mother and I were booked on a lunchtime flight as he was flying the evening flight. He'd been with Virgin for 18 years and a B737NG Captain for 14 of those years and yet we'd never flown with him. So I decided to change our flight. As we were coming down the aero-bridge in Adelaide, he said to his FO: "That looks like Dad", followed by "and there's mum behind him." He greeted us entering the aircraft and proceeded to show us his 'office'. Needless to say we were 'royally treated' by Cabin Crew during the flight.

Then on Friday 3 June, I was admitted to Epworth Hospital Richmond, Melbourne in a critical condition due to heart and renal failure. Ultimately, I was transferred to the Cardiac Unit in a serious condition. A series of tests were carried out to determine the exact problem with the view of further treatment back in Adelaide. The Cardiologist and Endocrinologist recommended on return to Adelaide I needed at least a month's rest. I was discharge from the Cardiac Unit on the afternoon of 11 June.

Luckily, our other son is a Doctor in Melbourne and was able to follow up on other aspects hospital specialists recommended on discharge whilst I was still in Melbourne.

I suppose it had to happen as I've the trifecta:

1. Coronary artery disease;
2. Type II Diabetes; and
3. Cerebral Vascular Accident (stroke)

A heart attack in 1988 was the basis of my resignation from the RAN after more than 20 years service.

As some of you are aware, I have been struggling with my physical disability as a result of the stroke that resulted in my

hemiplegia down the right side. The upshot is that I can only use my left hand which often trembles when selecting keys/mouse. The more pressure I'm under, the more it shakes increasing muscle tone and thus, placing further restrictions on the left hand. It takes me at least 5-6 times more than that of an abled bodied person to accomplish any given task.

In spite of these difficulties, I've enjoyed producing *Slipstream* over the past three years, even with the struggles I've experienced. Now, I must consider my ongoing health situation as top priority. Therefore, I regret to advise members that this will have to be my last *Slipstream*. To whomever, takes over, I wish them all the best. I will make myself available to offer advice in producing the 'Official Publication of the Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia'.

I propose submitting my annual report to the Federal Council, as normal, with suggestions and ideas in the way ahead for *Slipstream*

Regards to you all and thanks to all those who've contributed to Slipstream.

Paul Shiels

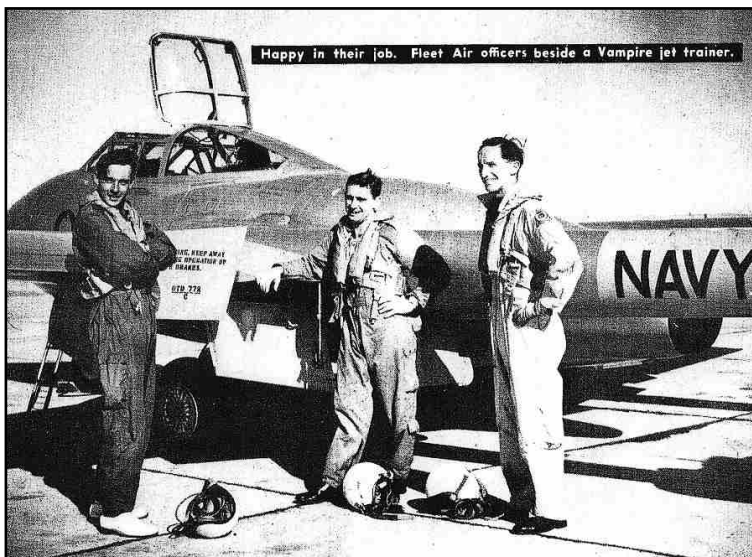


Recruiting for the FAA in the 1950's

Recruiting Advert and Pictures Says It All

(The result up to and including Observer
Course is shown on the attached pages)

*Included in a 1956 FAA Recruiting Booklet
relaxing alongside a Vampire Trainer is from
left: Peter Hunt, Kev Knowles, John Matthew*



Short Service Commissions as Pilots or Observers for young men between the ages of 17 years and 24 years

A certain proportion of Naval pilots and observers is drawn from permanent service officers of the Executive Branch. The Royal Australian Navy needs, however, more aircrew personnel than are available from this source and there exists this scheme of short service commissions open to young men with the right qualifications.

The regulations and arrangements include the following :

AGE: Candidates must have attained the age of 17 years and not exceed the age of 24 years at the time of closing date of application.

ENTRY: Entry will be made four times a year as advertised in the press and/or over the radio.

PHYSICAL STANDARD: Candidates must be up to the high physical standard required for flying duties.

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS: Candidates must produce certificates with passes in at least four subjects, including English and Mathematics, in one of the following public examinations :

Queensland: Junior

New South Wales:
Intermediate

Victoria: Intermediate
or Intermediate
Technical

South Australia: Intermediate Trades
School or Area School

Tasmania: School Board, Junior Technical
or Higher Area School

Western Australia: Junior

*(Note: This information was taken from the Fleet Air Arm
Recruiting Booklet 1956)*



Naval Airman Aircrew Course 18 Graduation from Recruits School Dinner at the Kerry Family Hotel 37 King Street Melbourne June 1956 – Note: The black buttons junior rates (sailors), wore on their 'square rigged' uniforms at that time, normally Supply Branch + Naval Airman Aircrew Trainees
Back Row Left to Right: ? O'Sullivan, ? Wilson, Don Thompson, Bob Cooper, Kevin Piddington, Alister Davies-Graham, Max Foley, Gordon Turner, Rob Rennick, Jim Campbell. Front Row Left to Right: ? O'Connor, John Blair, Graham Falkiner, Mick Williams, Ian Lawson, Brian McKnight. ? mark indicates First Name unknown



Naval Airman Aircrew Course 18 Guard at Commodore Divisions HMAS Cerberus on 18 May 1956
(Note: the white cover over the black rim around the caps. This signified the rating (sailor) is an officer candidate and expects to be commissioned on 'wings' graduation. The Naval Airman Aircrew also wore 'red' cap badges and black buttons as did junior rates (sailors) of the Supply Branch. With initial graduation of pilots commissioned rank was not forthcoming. Original pilots graduated as Pilots 4th Class (Leading Seaman equivalent). The story about these even earlier FAA aircrew by Fred Lane was in Slipstream June 2020 [here](#). However, later pilots were commissioned on graduation.

No. 4 Observers Course 1957
Back Row Left to Right: Alister Davies-Graham, Allan Pring-Shambler, Mick Magee, Peter Moy, Rob Rennick. Front Row Left to Right: Tony Bennett, Kevin Piddington, Ben Dunn, Gordon Turner, Barry Henry
(Note: The only officer with 'shoulder straps' is Ben Dunn. In those days MIDN didn't wear 'shoulder straps'. Also of interest, Observer trainees were promoted to MIDN following Recruit Course whereas Pilot trainees remained in the Junior Rate of Probationary Naval Airman until completion of course.



808 Sqn Cabaret on 20 June 1957 at the Bridge Hotel Nowra.
Seated at the table from left to right: Don Davidson, Shirley Watson, Rob Rennick, Geoff Litchfield .

All photographs and information supplied by Rob Rennick

RAN HS748s Await the Next Passenger Flight!!



Two RAN HS748s on the line ready and waiting to operate

*By Jack McCaffrie
with contributions from
Peter Adams
Owen Nicholls
Paul Shiels*

Once the aircraft were in service at NAS Nowra and prior to them being fitted out with the ECM training gear they did a lot of 'trash hauling' around Australia.

In January 1975, following Cyclone Tracy evacuation, and transport of divers to the Hobart Bridge disaster (read below), a HS 748 was dispatched from Nowra to conduct an airfield survey of north Western Australian airfields. This was in preparation for basing Grumman Trackers on the West Coast to conduct fisheries patrols for illegal Indonesian fishing vessels as part of Operation TROCHUS 75. The airfield at Broome was eventually selected and used during March-May 1975 by the Trackers¹.

Our most enjoyable runs in those early days were undoubtedly those to Perth, on some occasions to carry over or pick up Fleet Staff. The main entertainment on the return flights from

Pearce was trying to find the altitude where we would get most help from the Jetstream, and try to eke the fuel out to make Sydney nonstop. We succeeded several times and I do remember clocking a groundspeed of 336kts once.

Even these flights had their occasional dramas, such as the electrical fire in the cockpit one afternoon when we were about 140nm southwest of Ceduna, heading west. Jim Campbell and Lyall O'Donoghue were in charge as I recall. We diverted



Squadron personnel in front of a loan hanger with a loan S2 Tracker at 'RANAS Broome'



Queen's Flight HS748 used by the late Duke of Edinburgh whilst in Australia landing at Taree NSW April 1973

of course and even allowed ourselves thoughts of a good night in the local pub in Ceduna. As luck would have it, however, the maintainers we had on board were able to fix the problem very swiftly and we were on our way to RAAF Pearce again in no time.

Yet another interesting and unusual experience was really the story of two 748s. One day in October 1973 we delivered one of our Admirals (FOCEA I think) to HMAS *Creswell* via JB Airfield. He came down to accompany the Duke of Edinburgh who was making a brief visit to the RAN College. The Duke also arrived via JB Airfield, in a Queen's Flight 748 (Are you sure it wasn't RAAF 34 VIP Sqn who normally fly the 'Royals' around Australia?) and I believe he may have been flying it at the time. Winston James and Jim Campbell were flying our aircraft (710). While the Duke and Admiral were at the College the two 748s remained parked at opposite ends of the airfield. We flashed up the APU so we could boil water for a brew. The sound of the APU was enough to alert the RAF pilots who wandered over and asked if they could have a look at our brand new 748.

After a look around and a coffee they invited us to have a look at their bird and have a drink with them. We accepted and as I entered the aircraft via the rear stairs I was greeted by the navigator, sitting at a table at the rear of the aircraft with pen in one hand and can of beer in the other, casually working on his flight plan. Before we knew it, the two RAF pilots and ourselves had cans of beer in our hands

too. To say we were a bit surprised doesn't quite do it. Nevertheless, we joined the two pilots and the navigator in a few obligatory sips as they showed us through their very nicely appointed but considerably older 748. They made a point of showing the stowage for the extensive range of uniforms the Duke would be wearing while on tour. For the three of us naval aviators I'm sure this rates as a unique flying experience.

In between the Cyclone Tracy evacuation flights, a HS748 was dispatched to Sydney, first to collect a Diving Team and then to Hobart to the Tasman bridge disaster.

The Tasman Bridge disaster occurred on the evening of 5 January 1975, when a bulk ore carrier (*Lake Illawarra*) travelling up the Derwent River collided with several pylons of the Tasman Bridge, causing a large section of the bridge deck to collapse onto the ship and into the river below. Twelve people were killed, including seven crew on board the ship, and the five occupants of four cars which fell 45 m (150 feet) after driving off the bridge. Hobart was cut off from its eastern suburbs, and the loss of the road connection had a major social impact. The ship's master was officially penalised for inattention and failure to handle his vessel in a seamanlike manner².

Owen Nicholls gave a personal recollection of his involvement: "After returning to Nowra from the Cyclone Tracy flights I was stood down for the time being from HS-748 relief flights. The following weekend I went back to Eden to spend the

weekend with family and fiancé. On the Sunday I returned to Nowra late and went to bed in my Wardroom cabin.

“I woke up with the impression that I had been called that I had to go flying. Given the events of the previous few days I looked out of my cabin window and saw that the lights were on in Jack McCaffrie’s cabin. I walked across to his block and went upstairs – no sign of Jack but I heard the DXO in his cabin a few doors along saying in a phone call “yes sir, and we expect to have the 748 airborne very soon.

“When I walked in, he said ‘are you a 748 pilot?’ Given my informal Darwin refam he quickly told me to get down to the squadron as a ship had knocked the Tasman Bridge in Hobart down and we had to get a Navy clearance diving team to Hobart as soon as possible.

“With the round the clock Tracy operations we were quickly airborne, Jim Campbell as captain, me as co-pilot and Jack McCaffrie observer. In Sydney we had to wait for the divers and their equipment. The equipment and some divers in uniform arrived by Navy truck. Others arrived by a variety of means – private cars, taxis and even a Police Car, and wearing anything from uniform to shorts, T shirt and thongs.

“We loaded the aircraft, strapping down heavy equipment as close to the aircraft centre of gravity as possible. Think of air bottles and lead diving weights. We headed off in the small hours of the morning and arrived in Hobart around dawn. The 748 returned immediately to Nowra to participate in further Darwin flights. The diving team worked in Hobart for a further ten days but sadly found no survivors”.

Over the years many of the HS748 crew could come up with fascinating stories like Pete Adams conveying a flight of passengers to a RAAF graduation.

“Apart from the Cyclone Tracy effort, the best HS748 memory I have is a VIP job we did for the RAAF who asked us to help out. The task was to fly about 20 people from Canberra to Point Cook for a RAAF College Graduation Parade. Notable passengers included the Chief of Air Force and a grumpy civil Defence character who lived up to his reputation on the flight.

“Usually the flight would have been handled by the RAAF 34 (VIP) Squadron, but all their aircraft were occupied carrying politicians around prior to an election. My trusty co-pilot (Phil Landon) and I



Tasman Bridge after the Lake Illawarra hit the pylon with part of the bridge collapsed on the ship, sinking it.

dressed in long white trousers and short sleeved shirts, and the Wardroom came to the party by providing two immaculate WRAN stewards as flight attendants.

“It was an unusual job for 851 Squadron and kindly acknowledged by a very complimentary signal of appreciation from the Chief of Air Force - a good one for the Navy” Peter Adams said..

Air Traffic Control (ATC) had some memorable moments too with the HS748.

“On one occasion an RAN HS748 was conveying an Admiral CB – SY for a meeting in the busy period of morning arrivals into Sydney. The aircraft was instructed to expect 30 mins holding. The Admiral or his staff then asked the pilot to inform SY ATC that they needed priority because of the Admiral. When SY ATC declined the request, the HS748 called Nowra ATC and requested we ask SY ATC (Arrivals South).

“As we only had a direct SELCAL line to SY ATC Sector 4 (S4), Nowra ATC had to connect via S4. The reply was as expected which was passed back to the aircraft. Within Civil CTA priority is only afforded to Heads of State (Queen, US President etc), Governor-General and the Prime Minister).

“We found it somewhat embarrassing as the S4 Controller (an ex-military ATC) who was listening in, said that military ATC were aware of this rule. Nowra ATC felt the pilot asking, had been pressured, as it was not normal to call an ATC agency outside another's airspace” said Paul Shiels

Acknowledgements:

¹ <https://www.navy.gov.au/aircraft/hawker-siddeley-hs-748>

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tasman_Bridge_disaster

All quiet in QLD throughout 2021

By Ron Marsh

As all are aware activity has been minimal nationwide as far as the Association is concerned and here in Queensland we hosted only two events last year, and were guests at another.

Early in the year we held a barbecue lunch on the Gold Coast, but unfortunately the attendance was very small.

As the Anzac Day march in the City was expected to be cancelled, the committee decided to accept an invitation from Pine Rivers Naval Association to join them a week before Anzac Day for a wreath laying and a short remembrance service. This was followed by lunch. A small number of ex birdies attended.

For Armistice (Remembrance) Day in November we followed the pattern of 2020 and gathered at the Queensland Air Museum in Caloundra. There is a FAAA memorial plaque mounted in front of the museum and after the short service a barbecue lunch was held in the main hangar. We are fortunate in that Neil Ralph and Noel Dennett are Museum volunteers and all went smoothly. The museum has a very comprehensive range of aircraft, many of historic significance, others less so. The Gannet which once was stored under cover is now apparently abandoned in the "back yard" and is suffering from weather and neglect.

This is a disappointing situation, and I am sure Noel Dennett feels particularly peeved as this particular aircraft is the one he piloted for his first deck landing. I sent an email to the museum (as a visitor, not mentioning any FAAA connection), but no reply was received.

Attendance at the Remembrance Service was small and Stephen Huxtable, our branch president suggested that we might try a zoom arrangement early this year for our annual meeting.

With so many members living well away from the south east corner of the state as well as quite a few being limited in their travelling ability it could be an answer to some of our problems.

Stephen followed this idea by arranging a trial zoom meeting for 9 December 2021. Only a small number logged on, but those who did so agreed that the concept is worthwhile. I am hopeful that other members, particularly those far from the south east corner of Queensland will join in.

For those who have doubts about their ability to handle the technicalities of zoom, take it from me, it is easy.

We have had two more zoom meetings this year and again very few logged on. The idea behind

zoom meetings is to enable members who live faraway to participate. Please give it a try.

Barry Lister who was Queensland President for many years, and also one of the founding members of this branch died in the last week of June 2022. He had been suffering ill health for some time.

A memorial service was held at St Mary's Anglican church at Kangaroo Point in Brisbane on 7 March for the late Arthur Rowe, ex REM(A). Arthur had been ill for quite a while and passed away in January. For many years Arthur had travelled from his home near Warwick to march with the FAAA in Brisbane each Anzac Day.

Stephen Huxtable our "new" branch president was one of the birdies who joined after the carrier days and I am hoping to give an outline of his Navy and his later Army career, in the next newsletter. His world was completely different from that of most of us older birdies and he has some interesting tales to tell.

John Stewart, the Secretary advised we had to cancel our AGM last March because sickness had savaged our ranks and we couldn't raise a Quorum'. So the AGM is postponed until 30 July.

The Anzac Day in Brisbane this year 2022 went ahead without complications

I hope we can all enjoy a better year in 2022

DEATH NOTICES

DUNLOP, William 'Bill', died on Tuesday 1 July 2022. Bill was respected member of FAAA and was one of the originals who put the WA Division together. He had been in the care of his daughter Tracey for some time before his death. Bill's other career was that of a Detective in the WA Police. His Funeral was held at Pinaroo West Chapel WA on 12 July.

DUPEROUZEL, Jack ex-Chief Radio Electrician RAN (Rtd). Served in the FAA from 1949-1960. Died on 10 May 2022 aged 91. He is survived by son Alex, daughter Wendy & Grandchildren. Jack's funeral was held on Friday 20 May at Karrakatta Norfolk Chapel WA

HILL, Brendan ex-CMDR (O) MBE RAN (Rtd). Died at home in Huskisson, NSW night of 14/15 May 2022 aged 94.

LISTER, Barry died in the last week of June 2022. He had been suffering health issues for some time. Barry's funeral was held at Caloundra QLD on 7 July.

“What a Career?” From ‘Aircrewman’ to Dentist and now a Farmer

*By Dr Richard Daley, BDS.
Formerly a POEAC RAN*



At lunch after the ANZAC Day March this year Paul Shiels and I were discussing our lives in the Navy and I mentioned my time in HMAS *Moresby* with the Scout helicopter as aircrewman. Even though we had served in the same period our paths had not crossed before and Paul asked if I would be prepared to relate the journey of my life from the Navy to the present. Currently I am full employed running my mixed farm and cattle stud and on reflection it surprises me how I got here.

I joined the RAN the night of the Voyager accident, 10 February 1964, straight from school with no idea what was in front of me. After three months of recruit training I was posted to HMAS *Sydney* which had been brought into service as a troop transport. Within a few weeks of joining we were working up to take troops to Borneo. After 12 months at sea, it was off to HMAS *Cerberus* to the Electrical School and eventually back to HMAS *Albatross* to finish training in air communications. My first posting at Albatross was to Air Radar Workshop which probably led to my appointment as a Leading hand to establish the new Avionics Workshop on

HMAS *Melbourne* ready to service the Trackers and Skyhawks recently introduced to service. When *Melbourne* returned from Singapore after dry docking to repair the damage caused by our accident with the USS Frank E Evans I was sent back to *Cerberus* for technical training and promotion to POEAC. Returning to *Albatross* I taught at the training school until posted to 723 Squadron to join the *Moresby* Flight.

The flight was commanded by

LEUT Mike Perrott and the ground crew were CPO Terry Tuckwell, PO Les Crowe, LAM Rick Watkins and me. One of us had to be the aircrewman. It was not a role I had sought, however I grew to enjoy the experience. I did 10 hours training in an Iroquois with Pancho (I can't remember his last name but he was an icon at the time) before being considered competent enough to go solo with Mike. By the time I left the flight I had done nearly



On Final Approach to the deck of HMAS Moresby

250 hours off the back of Moresby. Survey is best described as McHale's Navy. I did three surveys and one include a trip to Indonesia.

On my first survey *Moresby* had left Sydney for the Admiralty Gulf west of Darwin before the Scout was ready for service so to catch the ship up in Darwin we flew to Richmond RAAF Base and folded the Scout into a Hercules. As we were the only passenger and aircrew ourselves, we were invited into the cockpit for much of the flight. When we arrived at Darwin Moresby was still at sea so we were billeted at RAAF Darwin. Mike made friends with a Dakota pilot so of course he took us for a fly and we reciprocated. Flying a Dakota with a big flock of Magpie Geese over the North Arm or baiting a water buffalo in a chopper at head height are probably not considered standard procedure however it is a lot of fun.

At sea I did regular session on the bridge assisting the Officer of the Watch fixing our position regularly while following the grid pattern set up by the equipment we would land for the land camp crews. When the ship arrived on the survey ground it was our job to transport aerials, huts, generators and the like and keep these camps supplied during the survey. Usually setting up and taking down camps would require us to fly all day during daylight hours. Often there would be no room in the cabin for me so I would use my safety harness and stand on the skid.

I did three surveys all told from 1971 to the end of 1972. When *Moresby* returned between surveys we would disembark to *Albatross*. In 1972 our time at *Albatross* coincided with the football season so I was able to play. That year our first deployment was to Ceduna and our second was to Dampier. The only major flying incident I experi-



Mike Perrot at the controls of the Scout

enced was off Dampier when we had a tail rotor failure just after we had released an underslung generator onto a preformed pad. I was on the skid talking the pilot on to the site and on release of the sling the scout moved suddenly to one side and Mike

dropped it on to the ground with me still on the skid. This was on Legendre Island and we had an extended stay there until a part was flow from Sydney so repairs could be carried out.

Some highlights of flying from *Moresby* were landing on Monte



Tail rotor failure on Legendre Island



Richard on the flight deck of HMAS Moresby in the early 1970's with the Scout behind

Bello Island after flying over the atomic bomb crater and inspecting the result of that explosion on the remaining structures erected for the experiment; landing on Top Gallant Island in the Australian Bight which is just a sheer column of rock rising 200 feet from the sea with a small flat top and doing the mail run while the ship was still surveying. We would leave the ship with enough fuel to reach our destination and then refuel and head back using ADF to locate *Moresby*. It is not easy to spot a white ship in seas with white tops and on several occasions we were within in minutes of turning back based on fuel before we located the ship. On return from the Dampier/Port Headland survey my nine years of service were coming to an end and I had to make a decision about my future. As I was qualified for Chief and also on a commission warrant the question I asked myself was do I sign on or take my chances in life. After *Moresby*, life in the real navy did not have much appeal. It occurred to me that if the Navy thought I had potential then maybe I did so In January 1973 I returned to Adelaide.

A new school for adults were

advertising for students so I enrolled to improve my matriculation results and by the end of that year I had graduated with marks that allowed me entry to any course at Adelaide University. During this year I met my wife to be Kay, who also had returned to school to improve her career opportunities, so we had something in common. Most

of part time jobs from rigger to fruit picker. We are still happily married today.

My first year of practice, 1979, was at Strathalbyn, a large country town in the Adelaide Hills, where we were introduced to the rural life through Kay's farming relatives, and it was during this time that we became involved with cattle. Although I had experience with cattle in Port Lincoln, where I went to school, and my mother's family have a long farming history, I had never raised cattle before. It was this interest that led us to seek a country practice of our own. We discovered the Mid North of South Australia centred around Jamestown had no local dental ser-

people ask me why did I decide to do dentistry and not medicine. Well, my skills in avionics, working in small spaces and fault finding was an excellent basis for this profession and I graduated five years later one of the best of my year. Kay and I married in 1974 and she worked as a personal secretary to the CEO of a large insurance company as our principal wage earner and I took a variety



Both Mike and Richard concentrate while lifting a load off the flight deck

vices so after consultation with the local government we built and established a practice in the town with branch practices in Pe-



Scout 891 back 'home' at NAS Nowra (HMAS Albatross)



The Dental Surgery at Jamestown

terborough and Orroroo where I practiced for 35 years before selling and retiring to my farm in 2012.

We moved to Jamestown in 1980 after I had three months as a locum in the Riverland at Waiakerie and threw ourselves into the community and at the same time began to develop our Red Poll cattle stud called Moyle Park, named after the part of the surveyed township of Jamestown we bought. Over the years our land holdings and cattle numbers grew. We also were very involved with showing cattle and agriculture politics and have exhibited cattle at Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney, Alice Springs and Geelong Royal Shows as well as numerous country shows. Our bulls have been sold across the country and one of our bulls was all breeds champion at the Toowoomba Farmfest. As my interest in the cattle industry developed so did my involvement and I was my breed's State President for many years, the National President for my breed for four years, President of the South Australian Sud Beef Cattle Breeders for two years and a judge at many S.A. Cattle shows. During this time I also served for four years as country council on

the S.A. branch of the Dental Association and was responsible for organising the Mid North Dental Group Bi-annual conventions.

Until I was forty I was in Apex which involved much community work. Then I got involved with the Bundaleer Festival in the forest south of Jamestown run by the Belalie Arts Society. Every three years we would put on a music festival in the forest attended by 5000 or more people and for the last two I was the site manager. My navy years stood me in good stead for this job. Our local flying club has been pro-

ducing an air show on a three-year basis for as long as the Bundaleer Festivals and again my navy experience was utilized in parking planes that fly in for the two-day event and in helping to control the exhibition aircraft on the day. Since selling my practice I have been farming full time. This includes sowing wheat, barley and oats, making hay and running a cattle stud. In recent time I have become very active in politics which I avoided when in practice. For some time now I have been the President of my local branch and more recently the President of my electorate and the campaign manager of our local member. Fortunately, at both State and Federal level we have been able to get our candidates elected.

So where to from here. Retirement is an option, but I think there must be at least one more challenge left in life for me. Subconsciously when I joined the Navy I think I knew that I need to put myself under pressure to achieve something with my life. If I had stayed at home I think my life story would have been more pedestrian. The Navy, much to my discomfort at the time, allowed me to recognise my full potential.



Richard and his best friend at the Red Poll cattle stud 'Moyle Park'

News from the West for period ending 30 June

By Sharron Spargo

Hello again everyone. I can't believe we find ourselves half-way through another year again already! While the autumn and winter days are shorter, I find myself always running out of that elusive thing called time. Science tells us that in 2021 each day was shorter by 0.05 milliseconds, with the year being 19 milliseconds less than 2020, so our belief that days and years pass much faster is actually true. The time it takes the Earth to do one full rotation on its axis is actually 23 hours 56 minutes 4.091 seconds, according to New Scientist. Knowing that doesn't help either of us much, but I do like to share a bit of trivia.



Our sojourn to the wineries of the South West proved to be rather successful, so much so that we began planning our next foray while awash with spectacular wines, unique gin, and craft beer. It all began with a BYO picnic dinner by the ocean, and even the lights being turned off at 10pm didn't have

the intended effect. The sudden pitch darkness didn't dissuade some of us from insisting on finishing the last bottle of wine, although, on reflection, I have no idea how much of it actually made it into glasses!

Our 7-hour tour began at our accommodation in Dunsborough the following morning and meandered through the beautiful Margaret River region, tasting wine, chocolate, and beer, followed by a relaxing lunch, more wine, and gins, and perusing some local pottery, all capped off with award-winning ice cream! It was a perfect day of sunshine, stunning gardens, beautiful food, and great company, capped off with a rather raucous and out-of-tune impromptu singalong.

With the help of Jim and Jan Bush, who organised a special dinner at Amelia Park Lodge, we helped Bill Atthowe celebrate his birthday in fine style on our last evening. It was a much more relaxed and happy crew who returned home on the fourth day and I heartily recommend a visit to this amazingly beautiful region and I, for one, can't wait to do it again

We were lucky enough to find ourselves enjoying another fine Anzac Day which wasn't impacted



A bunch of happy campers!

Anzac Day in Pics from the West

by the pandemic so much this year. Our usual venue, Jonny Fox's in Northbridge, was full of veterans re-connecting with old mates and young aviators hanging on the words of those who have been there and done that. We remembered those who have crossed the bar and all those who couldn't make it, as age has now wearied them. A wonderful day and a great crowd who thoroughly enjoyed

their day. A bottle of Pusser's Rum was raffled off and has now joined my collection.

Sadly we farewelled Jack Duperouzel in May. He crossed the bar suddenly and peacefully and will always be remembered as a great mate and a truly 'gentle' man.

Until next time, stay safe and well.
Sharron.



Stepping off on Anzac Day, led by Bruce (Blue) Lukey, Jack Suriano and Greg Kelson



Alan Winchcombe watches Paul Hodgkinson show his appreciation for all Keith (Squizzy) Taylor does for our division.



Events in SA for this quarter

By Roger Harrison

Well here we are, well into the second half of the year with little to show for it. That's not quite true as we survived our March 16th FAAA AGM with minimal bloodletting and gnashing of teeth, we survived the ANZAC Day March and lunch in April which was successful, survived a visit to the Keswick Military Barracks for our May 18th FAAA General Meeting, and we have two prospective New Members on the books and finally a revisit to Kapunda for the RSL Remembrance Day in November 2022.

As you are aware, the newly elected Executive Committee Members as of the March AGM 2022 were listed in the March issue of *Slipstream*.

However, the remainder of committee members were not listed. These include Jan Akeroyd, Vic Byers, Murray Staff, Trevor Grant and Ian Laidler. This may come as a surprise to some elected committee members as they may not be totally aware of their selection onto the committee. We can sometimes vote you onto a committee position in absentia, and that is not a small village in Bavaria.

The President organised the ANZAC Day Parade and lunch as the Secretary was in London on ANZAC Day. Some photos supplied from the SA ANZAC Day and ANZAC Day in London. Depends on how much space is available to the *Slipstream* editor, Paul Shiels, who is right now, reaching for his medication. Delightful to see so many Members able to squeeze into their winter rig. The ABC TV broadcast was rubbish and it was resolved that Michael Cain will contact his contact to correct the written word. In 1987 I submitted a very brief history of the FAA for the ABC to use in their outside broadcast of the ANZAC Parade, not a word mentioned.

The 18 May FAAA General Meeting was held at the Keswick Barracks as a way of centralizing our location



as well as having that military feel about the place, no matter that those in army uniform are all millennials. (Queensland read Born after 2000 AD). As most of those attending the Meetings live south of Adelaide, it makes sense to centralize which will add 20 minutes onto Jan Akeroyd's travel time, but who cares.

I think the general feel of the Keswick Barracks Café was right and everyone agreed that the lunch service and staff were exceptional. A letter of appreciation has been forwarded to the Café manager along with further dates to book the quiet room for further meetings. Not one of us marked the special event with a photo shoot for *Slipstream* after the fact that we all have cameras in our pockets



Gordon Gray, Eve Gray and Henry Young

7 April also saw 723 Squadron celebrate its 70th year of excellence in training and operations over several different aircraft types and with 50 Commanding Officers and a squillion ground crew and support staff. I was one of them over a few years to 1969 where I dodged the Helicopter Flight, Vietnam, by marrying my sweetheart in May 1968. I've done the maths, its 54 years.

I believe an article about our Henry Young, pilot officer, RAN Rtd will be coming soon inside the *Slipstream* Magazine. He is one of our oldest and alarmingly healthy members in the SA Division and a joy to chat with. The President and I interviewed Henry some time back over a coffee and it reflected the idea that some of us are under-achievers. A 99th Birthday approaching Henry, congratulations from us all.

HMAS *Encounter* was re-commissioned at the Torrens Parade Grounds on 28 May with all the ceremony only the Navy can accomplish. A flyer was distributed to SA Members who were invited to attend with the naval family.

Next SA FAAA General Meeting is on the 20 July at the Keswick Barracks starting around 1130 for 1200 for a light lunch followed by a short Meeting. All welcome to attend and witness what we get up to on your behalf.

Regards to you all.
Roger Harrison
Hon. Whipping Boy



Ready to step off for the Anzac Day march

VIC Report for the period ending 30 June

By Mal Smith

Greetings to all members from the Victoria Division.

For the first time in three years, we were able to participate in a normal ANZAC Day.

The weather was perfect and although our marching numbers were slightly down all went well. The after march reunion / lunch was very well attended and all seemed to enjoy themselves. It was pleasing to see quite a few family members joining us. A special mention to a new member Barry Diamond who along with his wife Mary joined us. They live a fair distance from Melbourne and it was an effort that was appreciated. We hope to see them both again in the near future. Unfortunately, our President Chris Fealy was unable to join us but Vice President Scott Myers stood in on his behalf and we thank him for his efforts.

Scott has moved to Sydney and is now back in the Navy. Along with an extra half stripe, LCDR Myers is now officially SO2 Aviation Projects and Test. The



new role is essentially an Operation Test and Evaluation Role at the Maritime Warfare Centre. Congratulations to Scott and I'm sure he will be successful. We will be constantly in touch and no doubt will see him back here regularly.

I mentioned in the last issue that we had arranged a weekend away to Tocumwal and Benalla. For several reasons this had to be postponed but our hope is we will be able to finally make it in 2023.

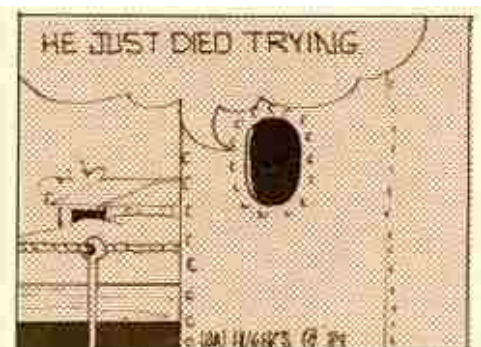
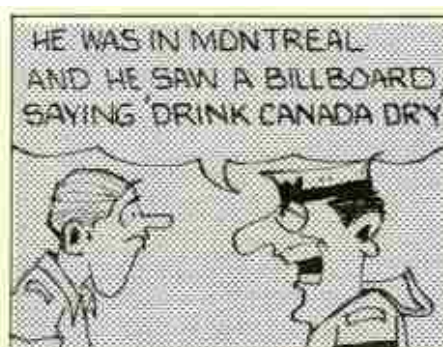
Preparations are now underway for our Annual Service at HMAS *Cerberus* commemorating the formation of the Fleet Air Arm. This will be held on Sunday 28th August. Any members from other divisions who are in Melbourne at this time are more than welcome to join us. Just let me know if you are interested.

In conjunction with our service, we hold an Annual Dinner on the Saturday night prior. Traditionally this dinner has been in the Hastings. For several reasons it has been decided that this year we will still hold the dinner on Saturday 27th August but in Melbourne, probably at the Waverley RSL. Details will be sent to members as soon as they are finalised.

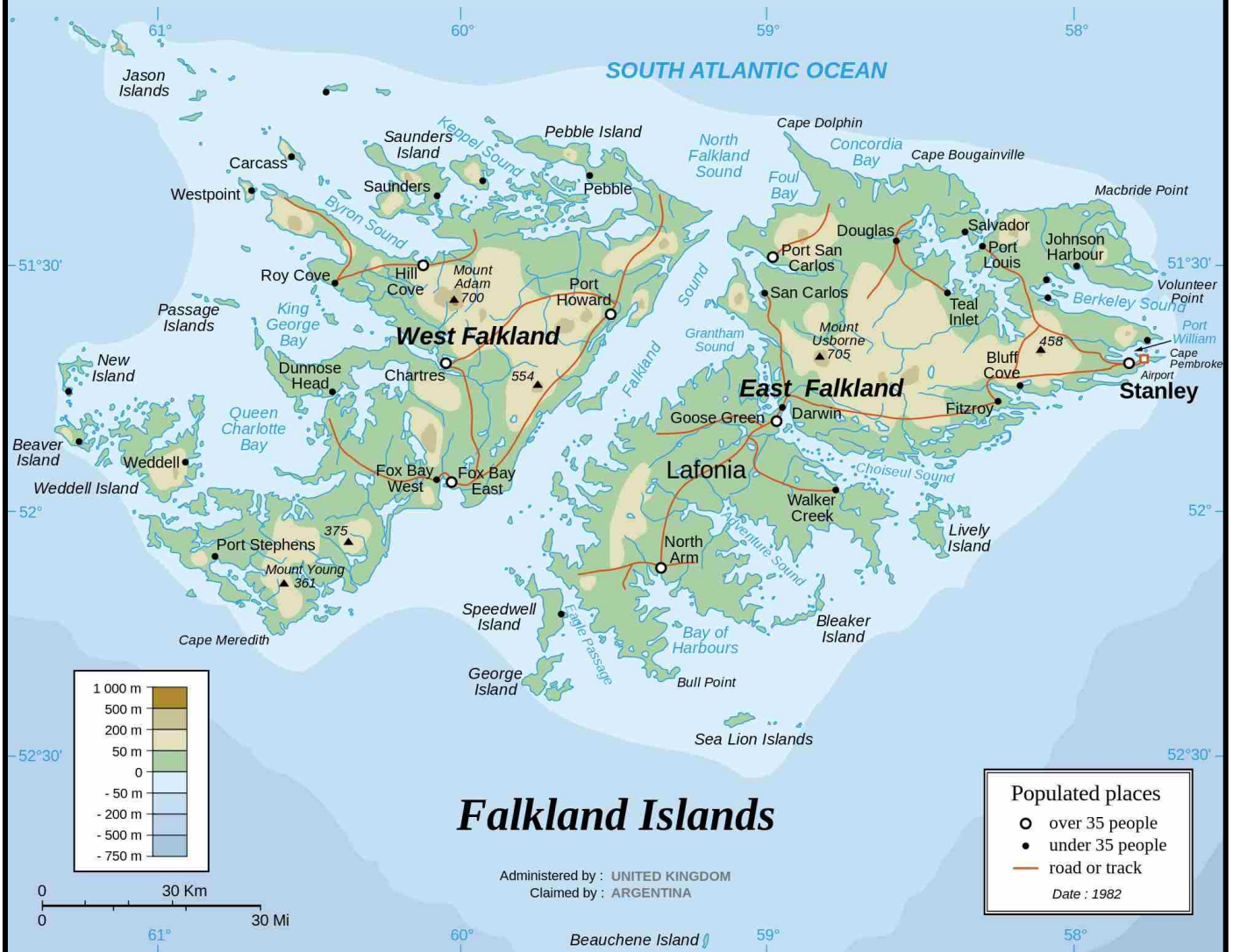
Yours Aye
Mal Smith



Anzac Day for the Victorian Division parading past the Cenotaph



How Britain Won the Air Battle of the Falkland Islands in 1982



When the Falklands Conflict began it seemed like Argentina had a massive advantage in the skies. They had over 100 aircraft of varying types. Some could operate from the Argentinian mainland and others could operate from airstrips on the Falklands themselves.

Meanwhile, the British Task Force was initially restricted to just 20 Sea Harriers which could fit on its two aircraft carriers. It was up to them to protect the Task Force at sea as well as the troops on the ground. To many that seemed like an impossible task.

Just how big was the Argentinian advantage? How did each side change their strategy? And how did British pilots beat the odds and

*From a Video by the Imperial War Museum [here](#)
Converted to text
By Paul Shiels*

take control of the skies? On paper, Argentina had air supremacy over the Falkland Islands. Britain would need a superb, high performance, fixed-wing fighter aircraft if there was to be any attempt to counter the Argentinian advantage.

It was Naval Sea Harrier, upon which British hopes were placed. This will be covered later in this article.

As the British Task Force made its way to the South Atlantic, the Argentinians began setting up de-

fences on the islands with men and supplies continually flown in. The main airport was at Stanley, the Falklands capital, with other smaller airfields at Goose Green and Pebble Island.

Stanley was the only hard all-weather runway on the Falklands, but it was still not long enough for Argentina's fast jets which remained on the mainland. The Argentinian Air Force had Dassault Mirage IIIs, IAI Daggers, Douglas A4 Skyhawks and even English Electric Canberras, purchased from the British in the 1970s. The supersonic Mirages and Daggers were a serious threat but flying from the Argentinian mainland put them at the limits of their fuel range.



**Image of an Argentinian Navy A4B Skyhawk attacking RN ships
In San Carlos**

The Argentinian Navy had an aircraft carrier, the *Veinticinco de Mayo*, which was also equipped with Skyhawks. While from the mainland they flew the Dassault-Breguet Super Étendard which could be equipped with the feared Exocet anti-ship missile, five of which were known to be in Argentina's armoury.

The Argentinians also had a number of smaller light attack aircraft based on airfields on the Falklands, as well as IA-58 Pucaras. It was a two-seat, low-wing, twin-turboprop, ground-attack and counter-insurgency aircraft. It had two cannons, four machine guns, and bombs and rockets could be attached to three external hard-points.

It was low performance, in comparison to the Mirage especially, but it was manoeuvrable and could take-off from short, rough airfields – perfect for the Falklands. In the face of all these Argentinian aircraft, it was crucial that Britain established air superiority before attempting to land ground troops on the Falklands.

The first step was eliminating the Island's most important airfield at Stanley. Denying its use would not only demonstrate Britain's will to fight for the Falklands, but also force a change of strategy for the

Argentinians. But pulling off that raid would be a very difficult job. A bomber would have to fly over 3,800 miles from Ascension Island to Stanley with multiple air to air refuelling manoeuvres on the way, damage the runway enough to deny its use, and then fly all the way back to Ascension.

This was the aircraft they chose for the job, the Avro Vulcan B2. A jet-powered, high-altitude strategic bomber designed to carry Britain's nuclear weapons during the Cold War. The Vulcan had two defining characteristics which were suddenly in demand. Its long-range capa-

bility which could be extended through refuelling, and its ability to carry 21 x 1000lb bombs.

At the time, the Vulcan raid on Port Stanley would become the longest-range bombing mission

in the history of aerial warfare, codenamed the 'Black Buck' raid. Just before midnight on 30 April 1982 two Vulcan bombers and 11 Victor tankers took off from Wideawake airfield on Ascension Island. Almost immediately the lead Vulcan suffered a technical difficulty that meant the reserve Vulcan, XM607 flown by Martin Withers, had to take over instead. Over the next eight (8) hours, the Victor Tankers completed a complex sequence of fuel transfers to the Vulcan, and to each other.

This process was not without its issues, but on the morning of 1 May 1982 it reached the target. The Vulcan crew dropped its payload of 21 x 1000lb bombs from 10,000 feet. Only one bomb cratered the runway, and the others caused further damage to the airfield surrounds.

A few hours later, Sea Harriers from HMS *Hermes* followed up with more attacks on the airstrips at Stanley and Goose Green. Later still, the RAF Vulcan arrived safely back at Ascension after 16 hours in the air. The Black Buck raid on 1 May would be the first of seven Black Buck raids over the course of May and June 1982 (two were cancelled).



An RAF Valiant Tanker refuels a Vulcan enroute to the Falklands



Image of an Argentinian Dagger and an RN Sea Harrier in a dogfight over the Falklands

The short-term and long-term success of these raids is still debated, with contention as to whether the cost of resources, in terms of the number of aircraft and amount of fuel used for instance, alongside the risk involved for the people in the air and on the ground, could ever be justified when assessing

the arguably limited impact of the missions.

But while its physical impact is debated, its tactical impact is clear. The raid on 1 May demonstrated that the Royal Air Force had the range to bomb airfields in the Falklands, and therefore had the potential to reach mainland Argentina. In response to that threat, Argentina decided to hold more of its fast jets back to protect the mainland. The following day things got worse when the Argentinian cruiser *General Belgrano* was sunk by the submarine HMS *Conqueror*. This forced the Argentinian Navy, including the *Veinticinco de Mayo*,

to largely withdraw to port. The Argentinian surface fleet would play no further role in the rest of the conflict. In the first air to air battles over the Falklands the British refused to climb to the Mirage's optimal altitude and vice versa.

When they eventually engaged, the Argentinians lost two Mirages

and a Canberra, all shot down by Sea Harriers. In addition to their fuel problems, Argentinian pilots also lacked experience. They were more prepared for a war with Chile than fighting over the South Atlantic.

Meanwhile, on the ground, Argentinian ground crews struggled to service their aircraft with spare parts hard to come by. That first day was crucial in the extent that it was it almost set the pattern for all subsequent operations. It gave the British enormous confidence.

Looked at from the other way around it must have had a colossal demoralising effect on the Argentine Air Force. This continued with the Argentinians deciding to retain a number of aircraft in defence of their airfields ashore. Had they actually committed more aircraft to deal with the combat air patrol over the landing area perhaps it would have been different?

From this point onwards Argentina essentially tried to avoid air to air combat with the Sea Harriers, using Mirages as decoys to draw them off while their Daggars and Skyhawks attacked the fleet. It seemed Argentina's air power wasn't all it was cracked up to be.

That was until the 4 May when HMS *Sheffield* came under attack from a pair of Argentinian Super Étendard. It was hit by one of two Exocet missiles and later sank, for the British this was a stark warning. The loss of an aircraft carrier to an Exocet would end any chance of success for the British Task Force. Therefore, the British carriers predominantly remained well out of their range to the east of the Falklands for the remainder of the conflict.

However, by increasing the distance they had to fly, this reduced the amount of time the Sea Harriers could spend over the islands, leaving ships and ground forces more exposed. On the 21 May, the first British landings began on the Falklands.

To minimise the still considerable air threat, the British chose to land at San Carlos on East Falkland. It was hoped that the hills around the bay would provide



HMS Sheffield after an attack by two Super Étendard aircraft with one Exocet missile hitting the ship. Sheffield later sank.



A damaged Tucucara after a British Special Forces raid on San Carlos airfield

sheltered waters from air attack, but that didn't stop the Argentinians from trying.

British ships were attacked by Tucucaras, Skyhawks, Mirages and Daggers over the next few days, but it was the Skyhawks that would become the most feared silhouette as the British forces could see the aircraft's impressive manoeuvrability against the sky from the ships below.

Few Argentinian pilots had even been trained in low-level flying, and fewer still in the ability to undertake attacks on ships in open water. Having flown for hours from mainland Argentina they only had the chance to engage in a

few attacks before heading home again. But despite all of that they still managed to achieve significant damage, all the while under fire themselves from the ships below, and from Sea Harriers.

Comments by a variety of troops awaiting to come ashore reflected on the Argentinian attack on the ships in San Carlos.

"We persuaded the flight commanders it'd be a good idea to stay on the ship. Of course, we never realised that that was the biggest mistake of our lives. Because everybody on shore was watching the ships getting hit. They used to break the masts, the aerals of the ship because the pilots were flying so low." Richard Elliott of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers explained.

"We thought at first that the Argentinian Air Force were mad, but as time went on, we changed our views drastically. They were very professional in the way they conducted their business." Peter Richens of 2nd Para Regiment was to say. Another said: "They came down San Carlos water the first one just got blown straight out the sky three missiles hit it. Their pilots were possibly some of the bravest men over the whole campaign. I mean if everything they dropped had gone off we would still be down there in the Falklands fighting."

Fortunately for the British, many of the Argentinian bombs failed to explode due to problems with the setting of their fuses. Essentially, the aircraft were flown at a height lower than the fuses had been set so the bombs hit their target before they had the chance to explode. If there hadn't been this issue with the bomb fuses, the losses at San Carlos Water would have been catastrophic.

By 25 May 1982, three ships had sunk, and eight (8) more were damaged. However, the Argentinian decision to target the ships in the Falkland Sound meant that the ground forces were able to land unopposed. British troops were now just 13 miles from the Argentinian garrison at Darwin and Goose Green and just 50 miles from Port Stanley.

Despite their successes at San Carlos, the Argentinian air forces were sustaining losses at an alarming rate. They couldn't keep up these kinds of attacks for long. However, with a limited number of British aircraft there were inevitably gaps in the Harrier Combat Air Patrols.

That's exactly what happened on the 8 June during the Fitzroy air attacks. As British troops were moved forward for attacks on the mountains around Port Stanley, Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships *Sir Galahad* and *Sir Tristram* were attacked. Both ships were badly damaged by Argentinian Skyhawks killing 50 men and wounding a further 150. Argentinian air attacks on the same day sank a British landing craft, killing six men, and severely damaging HMS *Plymouth*.

It was in moments like this that British helicopters became crucial, ferrying casualties to field hospitals or aboard ships. Since the sinking of the SS *Atlantic Conveyor* and the heavy lifting helicopters it was carrying, the remaining helicopters and their crews were operated at the limits of their capability. British forces were supported by a range of helicopters including one surviving Boeing Chinook and the Westland Gazelle, Sea King, Lynx, Wasp, Scout and Wessex.

OBITUARY CORRECTION

There was an error in the Death Notice published in the last edition of *Slipstream* about the passing of LCDR Les Powell. LCDR Powell's wife Sally passed away some years ago. I extend my apologies to the Powell family for this proof-reading error.

John DaCosta

Helicopters were the work horses for the British forces during the Falklands Conflict.

The Wessex is probably best known for its exploits in the Falklands. They helped sink the Argentinian submarine *Santa Fe* and recapture South Georgia from Argentinian forces in April 1982.

Towards the end of the conflict in June, a Wessex 5 fired two AS12 missiles at the Town Hall in Port Stanley with the aim of killing senior Argentinian commanders inside, but missed, hitting the police station instead.

So the Wessex had a crucial role that bookended the conflict. A week on from the disaster at Fitzroy, British troops would enter Stanley as the Argentinians surrendered.

Just how did the British prevail? How did they overcome the odds in the air? The answer, at least in part, is the Harrier. One of the Harrier's key features was its V/STOL capability which stands for vertical and short take-off and landing. It was this pioneering design feature that made it pretty much the only viable option for aerial combat in the Falklands.

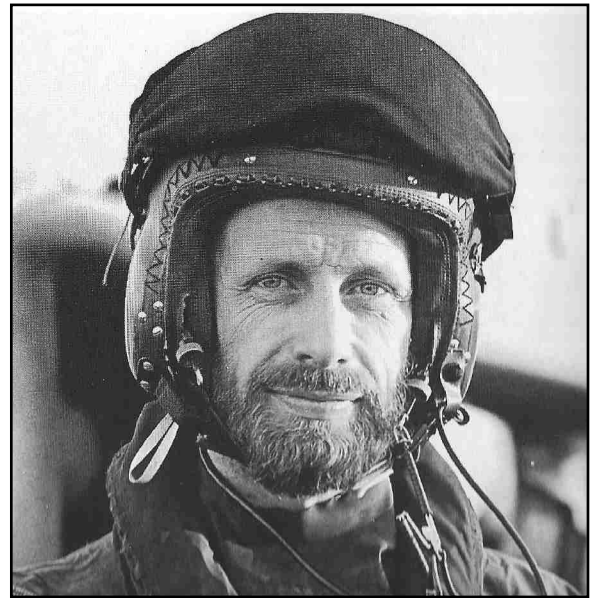
GR.3s were fitted with a Rolls-Royce Pegasus 103 turbofan engine and four nozzles, two either side of the aircraft, that could be rotated by the pilot. To achieve V/STOL, the pilot would switch the direction of the aircraft's thrust by

rotating its nozzles.

The ability to take off and land vertically would prove invaluable for when operating from the aircraft carriers, especially when the flight decks were already packed with other aircraft. The Harrier's benefits were not just logistical; it was also an excellent combat aircraft. The Sea Harriers were primarily employed in air-to-air combat protecting the task force and ground troops.

While the Harriers were slower than the Argentinian Mirages and Daggers, they had an important trick up their sleeve: the AIM 9L Sidewinder air-to-air missile. Previous air-to-air missiles could only be fired from directly behind the enemy, the Sidewinder worked regardless of their position giving British pilots a major advantage.

Those pilots had been testing their dogfighting skills against the best NATO had to offer for many years, making them a formidable fighting force. Together their equipment and training allowed the British to dominate the air-to-air battle. Of the 10 Harriers lost



LCDR (later CMDR) 'Sharkey' Ward DSC, AFC, RN—CO 801 Sea Harrier Sqn operating off HMS Hermes during the Falklands War. His book 'Sea Harrier Over the Falklands' was reviewed in Slipstream June 2019 and can be found [here](#) (for online subscribers).

during the conflict, none were due to enemy aircraft. Argentina lost at least 20 in air combat alone.

"I saw these two delta wing shapes low. I flew through them head-on thinking right we got to fight here, now at last. Then, as I got through the turn, there in the sky in front, Steve firing the first missile. As it exploded, a big gout of flame obscured the whole aircraft. But at that stage, Steve had already switched attention to his second Mirage which was some distance ahead and fired the second sidewinder.

"And this was really driving my mind crazy at the time. It was a wonderful thing to see; you know this is happening it's terrific! But while I was thinking like that there was a third Dagger who was behind me, firing his cannons. I then thought 'Christ'; watch your six o'clock Sharky as I was still in the hard turn the whole time. When I looked round and there was this Mirage passing underneath me. Beautiful colours in camouflage. All I had to do really was pull down hard and he didn't stand a chance because I got in behind him and fired my missile," ex-



Two Sea Harriers about to land on following a mission



A GR3 Harrier operated by No.1 Fighter Squadron RAF in their classic ground attack role at Darwin and Goose Green

plained Commander ‘Sharkey’ Ward

The initial 20 British Sea Harriers were joined by further Sea Harriers and Harrier GR.3s.

The latter operated by No.1 Fighter Squadron, RAF, from the very unfamiliar surroundings of an

aircraft carrier.

It was thought that the GR.3s would be used as replacements for Sea Harrier losses. But the losses were so few that they ended up being predominantly tasked with their classic ground-attack role, striking Argentinian positions at

Darwin and Goose Green and supporting British ground forces around Mount Kent and in the assault on Port Stanley.

So that the GR.3s could operate from aircraft carriers, modifications were required, and fast. Alterations were made to the GR.3 airframe and systems. It was even reported that holes were drilled in the airframe to allow seawater to run out.

Wars aren't fought on paper. Argentina appeared to have an advantage in the skies over the Falklands, with superior numbers and closer supply lines. But, the British advantage in training and technology made the fight far more even. Things could have gone much worse for the British had a carrier been lost or if landing forces had been hit at San Carlos.

But instead, by the final weeks of the conflict, British Harriers and helicopters dominated the skies over the Falklands. Of course, the final battle for control would have to be waged on land.

Obituary—CMDR Brendan Hill MBE RAN (Rtd)

A Canterbury boy born in 1927, Brendan Hill joined the Navy at the age of 19 as a Seaman Officer. When the time came he chose aviation as his primary specialisation and was selected as an Observer, and following training in the UK he served on 816 Squadron including aboard HMA Ships *Vengeance* and *Sydney*, two of the RAN's aircraft carriers, flying Firefly aircraft.

He was promoted to LEUT in 1956 and subsequently obtained his Bridge Watchkeeping Certificate before resuming his aviation duties back at 816 Squadron as Senior Observer, and then aboard HMAS *Melbourne* as Lieutenant Commander (Ops). Postings to AJASS and Navy Office followed.

In 1969 he was appointed an MBE for his long service to the RAN. An excerpt from his citation reads: “... throughout his service his devotion to duty, leadership efficiency, perseverance and high sense of loyalty have been the subject of special comment by senior officers”

During his flying years Hill was involved in a remarkable incident during the Maitland Floods of 1955. An excerpt from “Flying Stations – A Story of Australian Naval Aviation” reads: “Exercising their peacetime Search and Rescue role, the RAN's Sycamore helicopters graphically demonstrated their lifesaving abilities at the

end of February 1955, during serious flooding over wide areas of New South Wales. The RAN helicopters rescued 63 people in Dubbo, 23 in Maitland and 24 at Narrabri. Mr Ian Little, the Bristol Aircraft representative who accompanied the Sycamores, set up an efficient overnight inspection and servicing schedule at Bankstown. However, it was at Maitland, near Newcastle, that a Sycamore crashed while attempting to rescue a group of men from a disintegrating railway signal box. Two men grabbed the strop on the first pass and this left the pilot, Lieutenant Gordon McPhee, with no reserve power. Aware that neither person was in the strop properly and that they could not hold on for long, McPhee tried to manoeuvre them quickly towards a bridge, which was the nearest high ground to lower. Just as his observer started to lower them, both dropped off and were subsequently drowned. The helicopter winch wire flicked into a nearby high tension cable, bringing the helicopter down before the wire could be severed. The crew escaped but were swept 8 kilometres downstream before being rescued by an army DUKW amphibious vehicle.”

Brendan Hill died at his home in Huskisson (NSW) late on 14th or early on the 15th of May, 2022. He was 94 years old.

OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MIND

by Dr. John R. Carroll

BOOK REVIEW

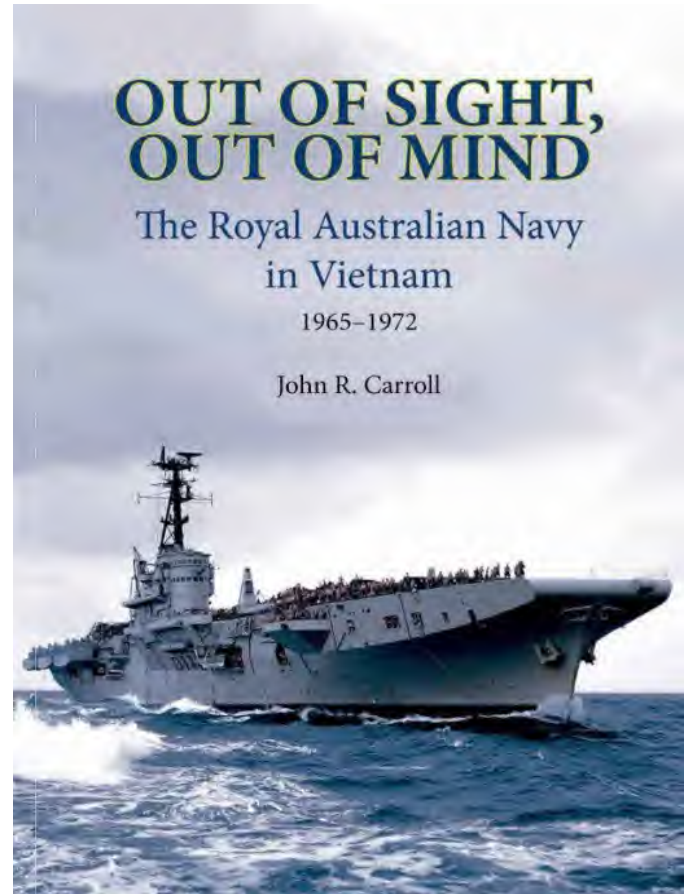
During the Vietnam War the task of moving, supplying and maintaining the Australian Force in Vietnam was crucial. The RAN played the major role and did the heavy lifting for these logistic tasks. The principal effort was undertaken by the fast troop transport and former aircraft carrier HMAS *Sydney*, which was always escorted in Vietnamese waters by an RAN destroyer or frigate.

Captain A. J. Robertson DSC, later Rear Admiral, quoting from the commanding officer's letter to his Flag Officer (FOCAF) noted: 'From 1965 until March 1972 HMAS *Sydney* completed 24 voyages to the operational area, transporting troops and large quantities of important equipment. Whilst in Vietnamese waters, she was subject to the same threat as other Fleet units, particularly rocket or swimmer attacks in Vung Tau harbour'. There is no doubt that *Sydney* was the logistical lynchpin for the Australian military effort in Vietnam. *Sydney* was assisted in the sealift requirement by MV, later HMAS *Jeparit* and MV, later HMAS *Boonaroo*.

Complement details of *Sydney* during each of her voyages to Vietnam are tabulated as well as anchorage details of the ship and her escorts. Security precautions whilst in Vung Tau are presented. There is a chapter with candid comments from the author's shipmates as well as embarked troops.

In his well-written and superbly researched book Dr Carroll offers evidence-based arguments regarding the critical role of the RAN. Furthermore, he presents compelling evidence that RAN personnel in *Sydney* were affected by the runoff from the liberal use of the toxic Agent Orange and its active and toxic by-product Dioxin. He further addresses the inequity suffered by RAN personnel towards provision of medical care under the repatriation system. There was also inequity for awards under the Honours and Awards system, particularly in respect to the Vietnam Active Service Medal. All this revolved around the interpretation of the word 'allotted'. Soldiers were eligible for the above benefits because they had been allotted a role with their battalion whilst in Vietnam. On the other hand, seamen were not allotted a role but were among the ship's company which did not necessarily set foot on Vietnamese soil. Hence the discrimination or inequity.

From January 1962 the US and Allied forces used herbicides to strip the thick jungle canopy which helped to conceal the enemy. Crops would also be damaged. *Sydney* and her escorts were often at anchor in Vung Tau harbour in waters now known to be contaminated with herbicide residue.



By the time *Sydney* and the first army contingent arrived at Vung Tau in June 1965 the Rung Sat Special Zone (RSSZ) had been sprayed by the USAF since September 1962.

In 1997 the DVA reported that RAN veterans were experiencing a far higher mortality rate than other Australian Vietnam veterans, particularly RAN logistic support personnel. This was further supported by the 2001 Vietnam Veterans Cohort Study where it was noted that sailors from *Sydney* and her escorts as well as those from *Jeparit* and *Boonaroo* were dying at a rate which was higher than the national average.

Carroll provides a chapter on herbicide exposure. This chapter argues a likely link between the mortality rate of RAN logistic support personnel exposed to the evaporative distillation used in RAN ships while in Vietnamese waters which was enhanced by the effects of Agent Orange. The author also addresses the issues and responsibilities in regard to the crucial use of the word 'allotted'.

The substance of the book was the basis for Dr John Carroll's PhD thesis – as such it is of an extremely high standard.

*Edited version by Kevin Rickard
(First Published in Naval Historical Society of Aust.)*

**THE DISASTROUS FALL
AND TRIUMPHANT RISE
OF THE
FLEET AIR ARM
FROM 1912 TO 1945**
by Henry 'Hank' Adlam

In this riveting critique of the Fleet Air Arm's policy across two world wars, former FAA Fighter Pilot Henry Adlam charts the course of its history from 1912 to 1945, logging the various milestones, mistakes and successes that characterised the service history of the Fleet Air Arm.

After his wartime Naval service, Henry Hank Adlam, like many demobbed personnel, tried his hand at many occupations. He became a well-known Bristol character and, lectured for some years at the University.

He is also the author of *On and Off the Flight Deck: Recollections of a Naval Fighter Pilot in WWII*, published in 2007.

Adlam is critical on the service hierarchies that made up the Fleet. He is backed up by his having served in six Carriers and flown from them in all five theatres of sea warfare during five years of the WWII.

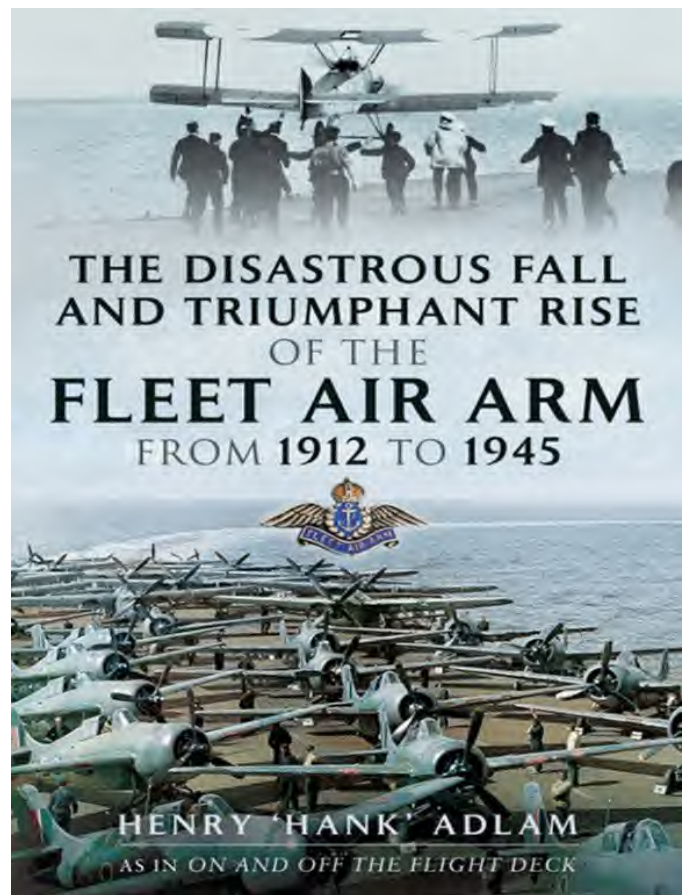
The book presents as a highly entertaining and potentially controversial study which is sure to appeal to a wide array of aviation enthusiasts. However, readers could be turned off with the changing story line from the many 'Wavy Navy' and Commonwealth personnel who were not aware of the dangers ahead.

The most obvious example of that is the combined British/American landing at Salerno in 1943. Two aircraft carriers and six Escort Carriers participated in the action. The aircraft being used were Seafires and Wildcats. As the Seafires were operating from the Escort Carriers and had a higher landing speed; 25 knots over the deck was necessary for a safe landing. The maximum speed an Escort Carrier could reach was around 16 knots.

No wind that day resulted in the Seafires being sent to the two main aircraft carriers. These two carriers also couldn't achieve 25 knots of wind over the deck that day. 150 of the 180 Seafires were lost, but only 10 were through German fire!

In addition, Adlam tables the catalogue of errors that destroyed the history of the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS), which followed the disastrous decision in April 1918 to transfer the whole of the RNAS to form the new RAF. The main and over-

BOOK REVIEW



riding criticism that the author finds with the Fleet Air Arm lies in the way it was led.

Adapting the oft-quoted "Lions led by Donkeys" description of the British Army, Adlam describes the activities of the Fleet Air Arm in the WWII as the result of "Sea Eagles led by Penguins" practices; when experienced pilots were led into battle by senior members of the Navy who possessed little or no flying experience.

This led to a whole host of disasters costing many lives amongst flight personnel. Adlam charts the errors that blighted the history of the Fleet Air Arm and shows how its recovery, and the triumphant turnaround of its fortunes were more remarkable. The reader is taken on a journey from inception of the RNAS during WWI, throughout all the many disasters and successes that followed between the Wars and on into WWII and beyond. This book offers engaging new insights and a degree of critical honesty that makes it one of the most enjoyable Fleet Air Arm histories currently available on the market.

**Help
WANTED!!**

**Why not become
Part of the Project?**

Book on RAN A4G Skyhawks

Ever Flown an A4?

**Fixed, Fuelled, Armed
A4s or Rode in the back
seat of a TA4?**

**What about talking
to A4 Pilots?**

**Any of the above
then Contact one of** →

A project has begun to write a book on the service of the A4G Skyhawk in the RAN. It will be in the style of the line of books made popular by "Buccaneer Boys". As such it will be focussed on the stories of the people who flew, maintained and supported the Skyhawk during its life on VF805 and VC724.

CONTACT DETAILS

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Peter Greenfield

(purpsg@gmail.com)

**"Those associated with the
A4 will undoubtedly have a
story to tell. We would like
to hear from you"**

The project concept is to produce a hard cover illustrated book, with proceeds assigned to the Naval Aviation Museum.

**Merchandise
For Sale**



SHIRT \$10

SHIRT (CHILDREN SIZE—Large only) \$5



MUG \$2



ASSOCIATION
TIE \$25



CAP \$5



LANYARD \$1

CARRY BAG

\$1

Please contact Jock Caldwell via email flynavy@shoal.net.au or phone/text to 0411 755 397, with your request, and address details. He will then get back to you with pricing and payment details (payment either via EFT or cheque)

Postage approximately \$10 — \$15